

HEALING THEOLOGIES IN CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND *SECRET  
REVELATION OF JOHN*: A CRITICAL CONVERSATION IN  
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

by

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Dedicated to my mother,

in appreciation for her instilling in me  
an unwavering love for God  
and for humanity and generations to come

## ABSTRACT

This thesis asks what might be revealed from a Practical Theology conversation between historical texts and contemporary Christian Science experience about healing theologies and practices. Certain enduring theological ideas (God's goodness and omnipotence, the deceptiveness and impotence of evil, and a correlation between healing and salvation) explain these Christian healing practices.

I investigate such ideas and practices using a Practical Theology methodology that accommodates an epistemological contrast and enables meaningful analysis of the ideas. This 'critical conversation' between the *Secret Revelation of John*, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, and myself as an autoethnographic 'text,' draws out comparisons and contrasting ideas of Christian healing. The three parts of the thesis reflect moments of 'conversation': (1) an overview of the conversation's structure and identification of its partners; (2) a detailed conversation between the two historical texts based on three key themes (the enduring theological ideas mentioned above), and (3) engaging my experience as a twenty-first-century 'text' in conversation with the same themes in epistemologically contrasting contexts.

I conclude that understanding theological views from contrasting epistemologies is a constructive means for expanding mutual understanding of Christian healing practices with great potential benefit to scholarly and ecumenical audiences.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Embarking on calm waters requires few outside supporters, but the controversial storms I have encountered in the preparation of this thesis have required support and strength from many wise, loving, and patient friends and family members. My mother instilled in me the love of God and love for humanity through Christian Science, which has served as my life's bedrock. While I was enrolled at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Professor George Kalantzis spotted my need for help as a Christian Scientist navigating my first serious encounter with Christian controversies. He also introduced me to another controversial world where the Nag Hammadi literature still provokes fear of heresy, confusion, and utter bewilderment, as well as fresh inspiration. One of those Nag Hammadi tractates, the *Secret Revelation of John*, has now been my conversation partner for seventeen years. Soon after graduation I met Michael Kinnamon, a leading ecumenist, who assured me that Christian Science belongs in the Christian conversation. Ann Graham-Brock, an early Christian scholar and George Chryssides, a New Religious Movements scholar, recognized my need for scholarly help finding the right means for the conversation I sought, and they continue serving as faithful mentors.

Next I arrived in the Religion and Philosophy Department of the University of Birmingham (UK) with two extraordinary supervisors, Karen Wenell and Stephen Pattison. Karen did me the favour of taking maternity leave which forced me to listen to Stephen's explanations of Practical Theology. Until then, I had thoroughly rejected it because its epistemological premise was contrary to mine. Fortunately, Stephen's patience, persistence, and explanations won me over, and his patience was well tested until the end. Upon Karen's return, she guided me with less tension but with scholarly wisdom through the academic rigor of conversation with antiquity. Patricia Walters, my local adviser, helped me channel my overflow of ideas into useful directions for research and writing.

I have no colleagues who have ventured into conversation between modern Christian Science healing practices, Nag Hammadi texts, mainstream Christianity, and contemporary PT scholarship. But I have close friends who are experts in one or two of these fields and who have listened as the thesis developed, asked probing questions, explained nuances, guided me to resources, and encouraged me when I was lost. Hal Taussig, an expert in extracanonical texts, read the thesis and offered important critical help; Celene Lillie's friendship and expertise on *Secret Revelation of John* is invaluable. Lois Carlson, Helen Mathis, Linda Bargmann, and Alexis Deacon kept my Christian Science anchor secure. Laurance Doyle and Amy Lang guided me through the science of quantum mechanics sufficiently to understand its meaning for this thesis. Three particular friends who are scholars and know my project well have offered deep support every step of the way through their biblical expertise, scholarly wisdom, friendship, and deeply Christian love: Susan Humble, Deborah Saxon, and Barry Huff. To my surprise, a group of high school friends celebrating our graduation anniversary, showed great interest in my project when we assembled last year, and I learned from them the wide range of interest this project may inspire.

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# Introduction

As a practising<sup>1</sup> Christian Science healer in the twenty-first-century, I am conscious that I operate largely in a bubble where communication outside my Christian Science (CS) community is relatively restricted. Although Christian Scientists converse readily among themselves, many other conversation partners and I tend to talk past each other. Despite our amicability, we unwittingly reject each other's fundamental premises and communicate mostly at a surface level. My research for this project is designed to discover what the idea of non-medical healing means in the world today. The meaning of ideas can no longer be conceived as a one-way street, where information flows from a knowledgeable source to the ignorant ones.<sup>2</sup> Therefore the idea *itself* gains meaning through its association with the experiences of others. This project is designed to dissolve the bubble, but in doing so, I will necessarily experience a fuller impact of the meaning of healing in the process of critical conversation with others. Apologetics confines me to the bubble, whereas the methodology of PT addresses the issues that cause the bubble and gives me the means for successful critical conversation.

Realising the existence of an ancient text, the *Secret Revelation of John* (*SRJ*), became a critical element for this project. It includes strange similarities with my contemporary healing experiences based on a nineteenth-century text,

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<sup>1</sup> I want to note that although I am using American punctuation in compliance with the SBL Handbook, I am making an effort to use British spelling in conformity with my British university. I am American, however, so it is possible I may not recognise the spelling of a British word despite my attempts to be consistent.

<sup>2</sup> An example of the failure of one-way communication is Latour's explanation that providing 'powerful explanations' only enables one to partake in the expansion of power, but not in the re-composition of its content. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 260.

*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (S&H)*, but its origin in antiquity provides good contrast for a critical conversation. These similarities, along with the strikingly contrasting cultural contexts, triangulate the conversation with contemporary mainstream Christians sufficiently to support a meaningful critical conversation.

The research began with my master's level study, where I learned of the 1945 discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library, which includes *SRJ*. As I embarked on my doctoral studies, I also engaged with the field of Practical Theology (PT), which provided the methodology by which I could explore the topic and form my research question, "What might a PT conversation between these historical texts and a contemporary Christian Science experience reveal about the theologies and their connections to healing today?" My thesis is that a critical conversation on *how* non-medical healing occurs in the Christian teachings of *SRJ* and *S&H* will yield meaningful healing insights to those within and without the communities of those who practise it.

One of the goals, therefore, is to open channels of communication for the purpose of extending the critical conversation. Those who can most profitably learn from this critical conversation – besides myself – include:

- anyone interested in *how* Christian healing happens theologically;
- scholars and Christians who seek healing insights from early Christian thought, especially from the Nag Hammadi literature;
- Christian Scientists seeking conversation with other Christians about healing in the ancient past and present;
- Practical Theologians who might adapt this methodology to open conversation with other communities that are difficult to understand;
- ecumenists who want to welcome a new voice (CS) as a contribution to a fuller understanding of Christ's purpose in the world today.

In Part Three I will elaborate on the benefits to these stake-holders in the conversation, but in this introduction I will briefly define Christian healing, Nag Hammadi literature, Christian Science, Practical Theology (PT), and ecumenism, and the nature of their interest in these topics. Then I will note the problematic aspects of this critical conversation, the thesis claims arising from the conversation, and the structure of the thesis argument.

## Definitions and issues at stake

CS: Founded by Mary Baker Eddy in nineteenth-century America, it is most fully explained in her primary text, *S&H*. Christian Scientists today study the Bible and Eddy's writings to guide their prayers and practice of spiritual healing. Christian Scientists strive to live according to biblical teachings and to heal as they understand Jesus to have taught and demonstrated it. Finding the means for communicating the healing theology of CS more successfully outside its own community is crucial to demonstrating its utility and securing its future.

Christian healing: Scholarly definitions of 'healing' vary so widely, it is difficult to identify a single acceptable definition,<sup>3</sup> but for the purpose of this thesis, I refer to the practical import of Christian theology that results in the correction of a diseased or perceived inharmonious condition of body, mind, or soul without medical intervention. Eddy maintains that Jesus' earthly mission was complete, but that about three centuries after the crucifixion the Christian Church lost the ability to heal as he taught it.<sup>4</sup> Expanding the conversation will deepen our contemporary understanding of the meaning of Jesus' healing gift.

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology: Selected Essays* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), 126.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1934), 41. I am using the 1934 edition of *Science and Health* throughout this thesis, because it is the last copyrighted edition. Eddy had made a number of changes since the 1906 version, the last edition before her death in 1910.

Nag Hammadi texts: The discovery of a collection of ancient texts in the caves of Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945 uncovers a decidedly different understanding of early Christian development than was realised until their discovery. Of the fifty-two tractates bound in thirteen papyrus codices, some are duplicates and some extremely fragmentary, but thirty-one add new knowledge of religion and philosophy in antiquity. They represent a wide range of thought, from Platonic to early Christian origins. In this thesis, the critical conversation between the second-century *SRJ* and the nineteenth-century *S&H* uncovers new insights into the healing theology of the early Christian church before it disappeared from common practice.

PT is an academic field that evolved from a pastoral commitment to care for parishioners in the eighteenth-century, a century earlier than the healing theology introduced in CS. PT is concerned with the way theological work informs and is informed by practice and defines the relationship between faith and theological traditions. It now embraces a broadly inclusive outlook that values human experience in multiple cultural or religious settings. Therefore its research methodology accommodates the particular experience of CS healing practices, and its critical conversation methodology offers a valuable means for analysing relationships between theological texts and experience. However, CS challenges PT's claim to inclusivity, because recognising a different epistemology and suspending prejudices are necessary but not easily accomplished. The successful application of its methodology here may provide valuable insights for application to other religious relationships beyond Christianity that are difficult to understand.

Ecumenism is a worldwide movement aimed at achieving unity among Christians without diminishing useful diversity. Ecumenists strive to fulfill Jesus's prayer that his followers might be one in order to show the world why he was

sent.<sup>5</sup> Christian Scientists began to participate in the ecumenical movement in 2008.<sup>6</sup> Conversation with CS challenges the ecumenical commitment to embracing all Christians, because some of the theological positions of CS stretch the meaning of normative Christian experience and doctrine. Some ecumenists encourage these new views as a contribution to a wider understanding of Christianity, while others contend that they spill over its boundary.

## Thesis claims

As will become evident from the arguments presented throughout the thesis, the critical conversation yields the following theological claims:

- that healing can be properly conceived as a component of Christian salvation;
- that an enduring theological premise for healing is present in the second-century text, nineteenth-century text, and my twenty-first-century experience;
- that conceiving God as Mind and God's creation as noetically or mentally constructed is a valid theological premise for non-medical cure and healing;
- that Christianity can be conceived from contrasting epistemological perspectives, resulting in either multiple Christianities or an expanded meaning of Christianity;

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<sup>5</sup> Ecumenists frequently turn to this verse (John 17:20-21) as the biblical justification for the ecumenical purpose: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

<sup>6</sup> For a brief period in the late 1960s, The Christian Science Church participated in some ecumenical panels and discussions, but participation from local Christian Scientists along with official engagement in the ecumenical movement began more actively and broadly with the invitation from the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches (USA) to visit Governing Board meetings and participate as members of its Commissions in 2008.

- that the meaning of Christian healing, as presented in both *SRJ* and *S&H*, presents complexities from a variety of angles: from epistemology and the origin of thought to the meaning of science, reality, normative Christianity, healing and salvation;
- that in the twenty-first-century, the theology of Christ-healing needs to include a rationale for learning from others.

The thesis consists of three parts: (1) identification of the conversation partners, methodology and structure of conversation in PT, and themes; (2) detailed conversation based on three key themes between the two historical texts, *SRJ* and *S&H*, and (3) my experience as a twenty-first-century ‘text’ in conversation with the historical texts and the meaning of these conversations for mainstream<sup>7</sup> Christians. I conclude with reflections from the full conversation.

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<sup>7</sup> I will use the terms ‘mainstream’ and ‘orthodox’ somewhat interchangeably and usually in relation to contrast with *SRJ* and *S&H*. ‘Mainstream’ emphasises an exclusive relationship, and ‘orthodox’ emphasises a contrasting theology.

## Part One: Methodological Preparation for Critical Conversation

The selection of the two historical texts as conversation partners is critical to this thesis, because they determine the content, direction, and critical objective of the conversation. Their commonalities are their epistemological premises and healing messages, but the extreme contrast in their cultural origins opens the widest channels for critical conversation. In Chapter One, I will present background information on both texts and then present myself as a ‘text’ in conversation with the other two. Adopting a twenty-first-century skeptical perspective, I am in a position to examine the value of both texts in a new modern context. The methodology of conversation with all three texts will be described in Chapter Two, and the themes for discussion will be explained in Chapter Three.

### Chapter One: Conversation Partners

First published in America in 1875, *S&H* is Mary Baker Eddy’s primary work, and I grew up in the twentieth century reading and studying it as a companion to my Bible as a daily source of inspiration, study, and guide to Christian healing. My family practised daily prayer and healing, which was understood as an expression of love for God and love for humanity; it was the way to follow Jesus. Many years later, when I discovered the ancient extracanonical text *SRJ*, I wondered how to relate it to my life-long experience with *S&H* and Christian healing in general and decided to learn more. The theological similarities startled me, but I had no theological or practical guide for determining its value in relation to the formative texts I already trusted – the Bible and *S&H*.



The value of *SRJ* as the most useful critical conversation partner became apparent because of its thorough theological statement, its extracanonical status, and its emphasis on salvation, restoration, and healing.

### *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as Conversation Partner

Many historians have attempted to locate Eddy's religious beliefs in the context of her nineteenth-century religious and intellectual milieu. But identifying her through conventional sociological or psychological methodologies is problematic, because her self-understanding resists such categorisation. She is a good example of philosopher Latour's argument that such a default position for a social dimension<sup>8</sup> misses the critical connections that were in place and that contributed to Eddy's ability to write and understand in her unique way. No society can frame everything within its own construction.<sup>9</sup> Eddy's self-understanding illustrates why her own perceived relationship with God functioned independently from social forces. She claimed, "The works I have written on Christian Science contain absolute Truth, and my necessity was to tell it. ... I was a scribe under orders; and who can refrain from transcribing what God indites [sic],...?"<sup>10</sup> Claiming that her authorship originated in God problematises our reliance on social science, but as Latour claims, when we seek to understand actors, we need to let them be "free to deploy the full incommensurability of their own world-making activities."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Latour argues against the default position for social theory, that "there exists a social 'context' in which non-social activities take place; it is a specific domain of reality; it can be used as a specific type of causality to account for the residual aspects that other domains (psychology, law, economics, etc.) cannot completely deal with." Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings, 1883-1896* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1896), 311.

<sup>11</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 24.

Samuel Clemens (pseudonymously Mark Twain), Eddy's contemporary, articulates three portraits of Eddy:

one by her bitter enemies, one by her worshiping friends, and one by herself. The first-mentioned is done with black paint, the second with white paint and gilding, the third with what Mrs. Eddy intended for white. As a result, in the first we have the greediest and wickedest Christian since Judas, in the second we have a duplicate of the Savior, and in the third we have Jesus and Judas most naïvely and complacently mixed.<sup>12</sup>

Despite such extreme public reactions to Eddy, these depictions only hint at the complexity of her identity as an author. Twentieth-century philosopher Foucault's examination of the author-text relationship helps clarify Eddy's authorial role. He explains,

It would seem that the author's name ... does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it; instead, the name seems always to be present, marking off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterizing, its mode of being."<sup>13</sup>

Eddy's name, or identity, does appear to 'mark off the edges of the text,' revealing *S&H's* 'mode of being.' She identifies the mode as both her revelation and discovery, resulting from her study of the Bible. She could merge the two ostensibly incompatible words (revelation and discovery) because her ideas came both gradually and suddenly. 'Revelation' meant to her, for example, both what she called 'Divine Science' (the Mindself) and its appearing to human thought in historical time. It is therefore both the presence of what healed her of the effects of a near fatal accident in February, 1866, – later identified as Christian Science – *and* the moment later in that year when she acknowledged a decisive awareness of the revelatory experience during her healing. Similarly, 'discovery' was also both gradual and sudden, with experimental years roughly 1845 to 1865; the healing

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<sup>12</sup> Samuel Clemens, "Mrs. Eddy, as Portrayed by Herself," as quoted in Keith McNeil, "A Story Untold: A History of the Quimby-Eddy Debate," <http://ppquimby-mbeddydebate.com/>, 2016. xl.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 107.

experience identified as her ongoing discovery and an ahistorical revelatory disclosure in 1866; and years of research 1867 to 1879.<sup>14</sup>

Only such a consolidation of discovery and revelation can properly situate *S&H*'s relation to its religious and textual origin, the Bible. Eddy affirmed, "...the Bible was my only textbook. The Scriptures were illumined; reason and revelation were reconciled, and afterwards the truth of Christian Science was demonstrated."<sup>15</sup> 'Revelation' was framed within Biblical authority, and 'discovery' maintained the primacy of the Bible for what she termed 'Christian Science.' *S&H* never assumed a supersessionist role with the Bible for Eddy, even though she ultimately ordained it, along with the Bible, as the Pastor for her Church worldwide. As such, it is best understood as a textbook, or an impersonal pastor, serving as most pastors do, providing an interpretation of Scriptures.

This 'mode of being' – Eddy's revelation, discovery, and dependence on the Bible as the basis of her writing – is one of three characteristics of the full picture of Foucault's understanding of what he terms 'author function.' The other two characteristics Foucault names in the author function, are 'functioning of certain discourses within a society' and 'circulation,'<sup>16</sup> and, like the 'mode of existence,' these other two characteristics substantiate the author-work-context role of Eddy and her flagship book, *S&H* in the world she inhabited.

As for the 'functioning of certain discourses within a society,' Eddy's intentions for *S&H* were noble. It was to function in society as an essential spiritual guidebook,<sup>17</sup> an inspiration to bind up the broken-hearted,<sup>18</sup> a healer of

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<sup>14</sup> Amy Voorhees, "Writing Revelation: Mary Baker Eddy and Her Early Editions of *Science and Health*, 1875-1891" (PhD diss, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2013), 66.

<sup>15</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 110.

<sup>16</sup> Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, 108.

<sup>17</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 87.

<sup>18</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 366.

all forms of disease and oppression,<sup>19</sup> a support for Christian salvation,<sup>20</sup> and even the means for transforming the universe.<sup>21</sup> Such claims may sound like the ‘white paint and gilding’ Twain noted, but Christian adherents declared success on all fronts, as testimonials and news reports confirmed.<sup>22</sup>

Like Eddy’s great expectations for the usefulness of *S&H*, her vision for its wide-spread distribution was prodigious. But in this, her hopes were modified by the experience of the community of readers. She herself reported that the book had been ‘cannonaded’ by the press and pulpit when it was first released.<sup>23</sup> Although she took responsibility for revising it to improve its presentation and content, she ultimately identified the opposition: “Until the author of this book learned the vastness of Christian Science, the fixedness of mortal illusions, and the human hatred of Truth, she cherished sanguine hopes that Christian Science would meet with immediate and universal acceptance.”<sup>24</sup>

This brief explanation reveals Eddy’s own understanding of her relationship with the book. She understood her discovery as ongoing, and she continued to edit the book and elucidate its meaning. Also she understood that her success in circulating the book was largely dependent on her ability to confront the ‘fixedness of mortal illusions and the human hatred of Truth.’<sup>25</sup> Because she

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<sup>19</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 77, 214.

<sup>21</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 371.

<sup>22</sup> Eddy’s collection of testimonials inaugurated a cultural norm for Christian Scientists’ regular sharing of healing stories in oral and written form. The final chapter in *Science and Health*, titled ‘Fruitage,’ which includes testimonials from eighty-four individuals, is one hundred pages, comprising one-seventh of the book. Another seventy-five testimonials are published in her *Miscellaneous Writings*. Also the weekly *Christian Science Sentinel* and the monthly *Christian Science Journal* and the quarterly multi-lingual *Der Herold der Christian Science*, all established by Eddy, contain testimonials in every issue.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Pulpit and Press* (Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, MA, USA, 1895), 5.

<sup>24</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 330.

<sup>25</sup> This phrase references Eddy’s quote from previous paragraph.

believed in the book's capacity to 'transform the universe,'<sup>26</sup> she maintained her authority as publisher and committed the rest of her life to editing and circulating her book.

Despite her longing to be understood and accepted, especially among intellectuals and clergy, Eddy discovered that there was no one with whom she could readily ally. Her first hope had come in a relationship with A. Bronson Alcott, a major figure in the American Transcendental Movement, who "hail[ed] with joy [her] voice speaking an assured word for God and Immortality."<sup>27</sup> But when he brought her work to the attention of the Transcendental Club, he was met with their tepid response to outgrown belief in miracles.<sup>28</sup> Eddy and Alcott ultimately parted ways,<sup>29</sup> and her independent path to success became increasingly evident through her own teaching, preaching, and debating. Years later, even after the spotlight of success turned on her, however, the pressure persisted as the all-male American clergy became increasingly alarmed at her success.<sup>30</sup>

Ironically, her strong point was her vigorous validation of Christian theism, the exact point the clergy tried to impress upon the world themselves. In the context of the broader historic rivalry between theism and humanism in western civilisation, Eddy's biblical theism united with Greek rationality at a time when they appeared irrevocably severed. First the theism of the Age of Faith dissolved into humanism during the Renaissance; then theism in the baroque seventeenth-century yielded to the humanistic worship of reason during the eighteenth century Enlightenment; finally theistic transcendentalism of the

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<sup>26</sup> Also quoted above, Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 371.

<sup>27</sup> *The Christian Science Journal*, "Testimonials," 6 December (1884): 8.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Peel, *Christian Science: Its Encounter with American Culture* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), 59.

<sup>29</sup> Peel, *Encounter with American Culture*, 96.

<sup>30</sup> Gillian Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, Radcliffe Biography Series (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1998), 321.

romantic decades of the early nineteenth century<sup>31</sup> was crushed under Darwin's devastating blow in the middle of the nineteenth century. But only a few decades after Darwin, Eddy's book, grounded in scientific methodology, countered with a radical position on God's absolute infinitude. An infinite God – if truly infinite – renders the existence of any *other* god or power an impossibility. Thus with an omnipotent biblical God confronting the age of scientific materialism, one could argue that a new order in the history of human thinking was created.

One can hear Twain's satiric critique, that this claim would sound like "a duplicate of the Savior." But Eddy's assertion of God's infinitude and omnipotence, in contrast to Darwin's matrix of matter, argues the power of God, not of herself. This argument forms the basis of the themes I have identified for the content of the primary conversation of this thesis. Eddy's dual claims to revelation and discovery, and revelation and reason, clearly identify her epistemological position, and her logic set a strong foundation for the conversation with the ancient *SRJ* and with me.

### *Secret Revelation of John*<sup>32</sup> as Conversation Partner

The author of *SRJ* makes a claim for the disciple John similar to Eddy's own claim to revelation. John is said to perceive the secret message (revelation) from Jesus in a post-resurrection vision:

Now I [Jesus] have come to teach you [John] what exists and what has come into being and what must come into being so that you will understand the things which are not apparent and those which are apparent, ... (3:14-15). ... Behold, now I will go up to the perfect aeon. I have completed everything for you in your ears (27:1-3).

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<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation* (London: Penguin Group, 1962), esp. 182-188, 231.

<sup>32</sup> There are three common titles of the document in English (*Apocryphon of John*, *Secret Book of John*, and *Secret Revelation of John*), although it was originally written in Greek, and all four of the extant versions are Coptic copies with the same Coptic title, '*Apocryphon Johannis*'.<sup>32</sup> Søren Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis: The Coptic Text of the Apocryphon Johannis in the Nag Hammadi Codex II with Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (Copenhagen: Prostant Apud Munksgaard, 1963), 2.

Latour does not claim that ‘actors’ such as the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* defy description, but his ‘actor-network-theory’ provides a valuable roadmap for discovering their meaning. His network methodology follows the direction of thought without imposing social (or theological) explanations. One reason we are better able to understand the meaning of the author of *SRJ* today is that we have access to more ‘connectors’ between the text and its modern readers than we did when Irenaeus was almost the only interpreter available to analysts.<sup>33</sup> His ridicule of *SRJ* offered only one approach to the text. Being able to access the author’s words directly, we are better able to understand why the author of *SRJ* would have concluded: “And the Savior gave these things to him [John] so that he might write them down and keep them secure” (27:10).

The history of scholarship on such texts as *SRJ* is important to this conversation, because it demonstrates part of the difficulty in hearing the voice of the author of *SRJ*. Since the seventeenth century most of the texts now associated with Nag Hammadi discoveries and believed to have been extinct were categorised as ‘Gnostic,’ representing a type of second-century heresy called ‘Gnosticism.’ In the late 1980s and early 1990s Williams and King pried open a new channel of thought regarding these newly discovered texts, challenging traditional scholarship as an anachronistic categorisation. By 1996, Williams declared ‘gnosticism’ had become synonymous with a chronic inclination toward ‘protest’ or ‘revolt.’ This attitude probably had little to do with normal struggles to understand the text,

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<sup>33</sup> The earliest evidence for the existence of *SRJ* is through the polemical work of Irenaeus in his *Exposé and Overthrow of What is Falsely Called ‘Knowledge’* (or more commonly known as *Against the Heresies*), written around 180 CE. Although there are significant differences between his references to the work and the tractates discovered in the modern age, the similarities indicate his acquaintance with at least a portion of the text (see p. 17, King). King also demonstrates other communities who likely used and responded to the ideas of *SRJ* (see pp. 7-13, 244, King). Karen L. King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 7-13, 17, 244.

“but rather is presumed to be from the start a conscious and systematic perversion of the text’s plain meaning, as an instrument for polemical anarchism.”<sup>34</sup>

Such categorisation distorts good scholarship by creating clichés repeated often enough to establish deeply rooted generalisations about ‘all gnostic sources.’ Williams identifies five such clichés, which could all be argued as present in *SRJ*. I summarise them to illustrate the types of misleading characterisations that distort the author’s own voice in this critical conversation:

1. These texts reverse the accepted interpretation of Scriptures.
2. They share anti-cosmic attitudes, thus isolating themselves from society.
3. They express some form of hatred of the body.
4. They have little interest in virtue and ethical improvement.
5. They teach that individual natures and destinies are fixed at birth.<sup>35</sup>

King argues “how thoroughly the study of Gnosticism is tied to defining normative Christianity.”<sup>36</sup> I will also dispute these and other accusations as misleading characteristics of *SRJ*’s message throughout the thesis.<sup>37</sup> *SRJ* scholarship after the Nag Hammadi discovery has helped us discover distortions in previous interpretations of what had been available prior to 1945. But also in a larger context, a closer study of all the texts in the collection has made it clear that Christian identity had formed itself against a perceived enemy that had been seriously misunderstood and misrepresented. It is important “to recognize and correct the ways in which reinscribing the discourses of orthodoxy and heresy

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 263.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 52.

<sup>36</sup> Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 218.

<sup>37</sup> Specific discussions on these accusations are in Chapter Four, “Cultural Context for Creation in *SRJ* and *S&H*,” Chapter Five, “The Need for Gnosis,” “Healing as Alternative to Martyrdom;” Chapter Six, “The Importance of Salvation in *SRJ* and *S&H*,” “Body;” Chapter Seven, “Implications of New Scholarship;” and Chapter Nine, “Scholars Seeking Healing Insights from Nag Hammadi Literature.”



distort our reading and reconstruction of ancient religion.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the struggle with these texts continues. How much does the Nicene Creed anachronistically colour our understanding of earlier forms of Christian thought? Are early Christianities better understood in a pluralistic sense? Most significantly, my question is, what does *SRJ* teach us about early Christian understanding and practices related to healing when we are disabused of its opposition to the Christian purpose?

Although each text must be analysed in its own context,<sup>39</sup> some common attributes can be identified: similar influential philosophical attitudes (such as Stoicism),<sup>40</sup> shared contemporary needs (such as comfort regarding martyrdom),<sup>41</sup> common history (such as Jewish life in the Greco-Roman culture), and mutual devotion to Jesus and his followers, all of which contribute to the fuller understanding of the meaning of each distinct Christian letter, treatise, document, or artifact. Reconceiving the history of early Christ movements<sup>42</sup> in this way reveals not only what was at stake in the conflicts *among* Christians during this era, but deeper insights into the meaning of better and lesser known texts.<sup>43</sup> The

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<sup>38</sup> King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 218.

<sup>39</sup> David Brakke reminds his readers in *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) that diversity among Christian groups persisted into the fourth century (133). Constantine’s enforcement of the decisions of the Council of Nicea in 325 set in motion an international orthodoxy (135), but a single orthodox Church never entirely succeeded. He concludes there was no single ‘Church’ that rejected a single teaching called ‘Gnosticism’ (136). Each text stood on its own merits and existed within its own context; therefore each must be received as a unique expression of early Christian thought.

<sup>40</sup> Karen L. King, “The Gospel of Mary.” Pages 741-7 in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The Revised and Updated Translation of Sacred Gnostic Texts*. Edited by Marvin Meyer (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 743.

<sup>41</sup> Religious and philosophical problems of martyrdom are discussed in Chapter Five. Deborah Saxon, “Representations of the Care of the Soul in Early Christian Texts” (PhD diss, Joint Iliff and University of Denver, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> I use this term, ‘Christ movement’ somewhat synonymously with ‘Christians’ because it reflects the character of the Christian communities. It is doubtful that these groups called themselves ‘Christian’ at the time.

<sup>43</sup> Some examples: Antti Marjanen. “A Salvific Act of Transformation or a Symbol of Defilement? Baptism in *Valentinian Liturgical Readings* (NHC XI,2) and in the *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX3),” 245-59. Also Tuomas Rasimus. “Johannine Background of the Being-Life-Mind Triad,” 369-409. Both essays from *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of*

purpose of this thesis is not to catalogue and interpret doctrine, but to reveal, through conversation with a more modern text and the ‘text’ of contemporary practice, the ways in which the author of *SRJ* may have envisioned healing and salvation.

The relative importance of the *SRJ* may be deduced from its content and frequency of appearance in the Nag Hammadi codices. It is the first Christian document known to develop the full story of salvation, beginning with the nature of God and creation, including the cause for human suffering and sin, and concluding with the means for deliverance.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, no other text is found more than twice in the Nag Hammadi collection, implying its usefulness in the context of the other texts with which it appears. Although later historians had only known the existence of *SRJ* through the writings of Irenaeus (fl. 180 CE) up to 1896, four copies have now been discovered.<sup>45</sup> Historians’ prior knowledge of *SRJ* is derived from Books 1 and 2 of Irenaeus’s *Adversus haereses*, which displays his special disdain for it. Its fate may have been tied to other texts which Irenaeus identified as improper Christian doctrine, as there is as yet no further evidence of its circulation after the fourth century.

Two of the four newly discovered versions of *SRJ* include lengthy portions not included in the shorter ones, and the shorter ones were likely copied by different scribes, with the result of four texts, three distinct versions, and two lengths.<sup>46</sup> Most scholars follow the view that the longer version includes an independent composition, known as the ‘Pronoia\* [please consult the Glossary in

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John D. Turner, Kevin Corrigan, Tuomas Rasimus. *Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies*, eds., Johannes van Oort, Einar Thomassen, (Boston: Brill, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, vii.

<sup>45</sup> The first copy of the text known to modern scholars appeared in a Cairo antiquities market in 1896, and three more were discovered in codices in the Nag Hammadi caves in Egypt. The shorter version is approximately the same length as the canonical Letter to the Hebrews and about four chapters (or one-seventh) shorter than the longer version.

<sup>46</sup> My use of *SRJ* quotes the longer version, Codex II, except where noted.

the Appendix 1 for asterisked terms] monologue,' worked into the original.<sup>47</sup> King argues this redaction with the longer version signals a shifting perspective among readers who used *SRJ*,<sup>48</sup> and I detect the possibility of an increasing emphasis on healing, especially as it relates to salvation. The topic of demons and their relationship to the body (which will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five) was an essential aspect of the *SRJ* message in the shorter version, but its extension through a much longer list of demons' names and assignments to specific body parts clarifies the origin and meaning of demons in *SRJ*'s understanding of illness and healing. The extended list of demons in the longer version of *SRJ* probably expresses the importance of healing in the *SRJ* narrative objective.

*SRJ* is uniquely situated among the tractates of Nag Hammadi to be in conversation with *S&H*, because its full story of salvation including the integral relationship with healing overlaps in significant ways with the theological basis for salvation and healing in *S&H*. The correlation between salvation and healing will be discussed in Part Two, Chapter Six. Also because *S&H* itself is fully dependent on canonised Scripture, the extracanonical status of *SRJ*, in conversation with a text in accord with Scripture, adds an element of theological depth to all conversation partners.

## Myself as Conversation Partner

My experience of being healed and of healing others offers a different perspective on these healing theologies and allows me to raise concerns that might be missed by scholars who lack these experiences. Prolonged healings or even an

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<sup>47</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 244-5. This section is similar to the Prologue of the *Gospel of John* and *Perfect Mind*. It includes the Jewish conceptualisation of Wisdom as a salvific figure.

<sup>48</sup> King identifies three notable modifications in religious thought between the shorter and longer *SRJ* versions: an increased interest in rationalising ritual practice; a shift in some gender imagery; and an enrichment of intertextual allusions to the *Gospel of John*. *Secret Revelation of John*, 257.

occasional failure to heal also open up a dimension for critiquing these experiences, thereby widening the lens through which we can observe the meaning and experience of healing. The introduction of my own experience in a work of scholarship serves to provide valuable data to use in conversation with the historical texts. It triangulates the conversation, contributing relevance to the historical texts, and adds a measure of authenticity to the written theories of healing.

Therefore, I adopt a loosely ‘autoethnographic’ approach<sup>49</sup> to my role in the conversation. I recognise a couple of limitations in this arrangement, in that knowledge of ‘me’ is limited by what I provide in writing. I am also not an outside, disinterested *observer* of a conversation, because I am a person of faith, engaged in a conversation of special interest to my healing experience. Therefore, my inside interests are compelling me both to act and to step outside of an apologetic mode enough to provide data for critical evaluation. The autoethnographic approach gives me a framework for “a critically reflexive methodology... to critically reflect upon the way in which our personal lives intersect, collide and commune with others in the body politic.”<sup>50</sup>

Experience with my own healings and my healing of others brings a different perspective from those without these experiences, and it allows for an interrogation of concerns that would be missed in an abstract analysis. Furthermore, my experience with prolonged healing or even failure to heal opens a dimension for critiquing the historical texts unavailable to those who do not also experience healings. As a living text I am able to limit which parts of my

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<sup>49</sup> I adopt Stephen Pattison’s use of a ‘loosely autoethnographic approach,’ defined as a “broad framework that gives some credence to the importance of persons, narratives and passions within academic discourse.” Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>50</sup> Heather Walton, *Writing Methods in Theological Reflection* (London: SCM Press), 2014, 3.

experience to disclose, but I acknowledge that what is painful for me is sometimes beneficial to others.

I occupy two places with two distinct worldviews within these conversations: one from the position of having an ‘action-guiding worldview’<sup>51</sup> comparable with the historical texts,’ and the other from a radically different and borrowed worldview that provides a critical perspective of the first one. The borrowed worldview comes from the contrasting epistemological perspective described in Chapter Two.

My action-guiding worldview is a cultivated one that admittedly contradicts empirical knowledge and self-oriented viewpoints, but I strive to understand it better in order to flourish in what I believe is its healing theology. It claims three essential ideas: that there is one God who sees creation as a reflection of God’s own goodness; that humans who see the world according to their own finite senses and worldly education suffer from those limitations until they allow Christ to align them with God’s view; and that from this adjustment, they experience healing and ultimately the full salvation.<sup>52</sup> This worldview is the basis of my healing experiences, because it guides my thoughts and actions in my practice of healing. Whether I pray\* for myself or others, I open my heart to Christ, to understand the government of God’s laws\* better, and to yield to those laws. Some of my experiences of the relationship between prayer and the action-guiding worldview include the following:

When I had a blood infection from a broken blister, I prayed to discern God’s purity that was never invaded by external disruption. That replaced my fear of being hurt by something that seemed greater than God. Jesus rebuked his disciples for their little faith in God’s love.

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<sup>51</sup> This phrase coined by Pattison emphasises the fact that worldviews are not passive, but cause and guide human actions. Stephen Pattison, *Seeing Things: Deepening Relations with Visual Artefacts* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>52</sup> These three essential ideas form the genesis of the three themes that will be developed throughout the thesis.

When my obstetrician was concerned with the size of my small pelvis, I prayed to understand better how God/Love makes room during the birth process for all of God's children. Jesus welcomed the little children, so I could trust this love.

When I experienced symptoms of arthritis, I prayed to sync my own thoughts and actions with God's love that does not play favourites. Jesus taught that the meek inherit the earth so the only way to believe that we are all worthy of God's gift of health was to stop judging others' worthiness.

When an illness caused my lungs to become painful and breathing difficult, I prayed for the *inspiration* I needed from divine Love. Jesus's assurance that the kingdom of God was near at hand comforted me.

The list continues, but in each of these cases and many more, I experienced full physical healing, and I gained some new perspective on Christ as healer. I think of each healing experience as having played an essential role in my ultimate and full salvation. These experiences illustrate different facets of the theological ideas that emerge from the three themes and will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapters Four through Six.

A brief description of my public healing practice illustrates the correlation between my faith and practice. When a patient calls on me for healing treatment<sup>53</sup> through a phone call, office visit, email, or any by any means, I listen carefully with three questions in mind: what does the patient describe or think of his or her own complaint; what is the message of Christ that meets this particular human need; and what should I say or do to bring this message to the patient? As I pray and listen, I often offer the patient words of comfort and prayer with some ideas to ponder, study, or pray about after our conversation.

My answers to these three questions reflect my commitment to the worldview of Mind's loving government, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. I need to consider my own thought regarding the patient's situation. How much of what I hear is the patient's own voice, my worldview, cultural influences, or

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<sup>53</sup> As a CS practitioner, officially recognised by the Christian Science Church, I abide by its 'Scope of Services,' <http://www.christianscience.com/member-resources/christian-science-practitioners>. The document, depicting the expectations of the CS practitioner's services and behaviour, cannot be quoted in part, so it is available in PDF form through the online link.

Christ (or, Word of God)? Secondly, the success of a case depends on the message of Christ, but the practitioner's grasp of that message is also contingent upon his or her receptivity, spiritual maturity, wisdom, integrity, grace, strength, and many other personal attributes. The theology of evil and how to deal with it is discussed in Chapter Five and grounds my daily prayer for this spiritual strength. The theology of evil and how to deal with it is discussed in Chapter Five and grounds my daily prayer for this spiritual strength. Striving for humility and honesty are essential daily prayers that guard against the evil of doubt, fear, and selfish ambition.

Finally, the knowledge of what to say to the patient comes from awareness of the presence of Christ, or Love. Tender encouragement and pitiful patience with fear can never be replaced with formulas or speeches.<sup>54</sup> However, occasionally, a stern rebuke may also be necessary to awaken a patient's lethargy.<sup>55</sup> The crucial place in the treatment is where Christ must meet the human condition, and the incarnational aspect of the treatment contrasts with psychological methods, including hypnotism and positive thinking, because CS treatment relies entirely on Christ to change or 'heal' the frightened, inharmonious consciousness of the patient.

Critiquing myself as a text requires self-disclosure. Finding similarities between my worldview and those I find in *SRJ* and *S&H* tempt me to seek justification or proof that the ancient and more recent texts validate my own views. But, conscious of my bias, I also want to allow the two texts to speak independently. The painful difference between eisegesis and hermeneutical interpretation is the willingness to become vulnerable and to be willing to be

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<sup>54</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 367.

<sup>55</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 420.

transformed in the process of conversation.<sup>56</sup> Both transparency and vulnerability challenge my role as conversation partner.

One of my obstacles to transparency arises from the refrain I hear from PT sources that “Practical theological activity is in itself transformative as a process for those who undertake it.”<sup>57</sup> I had to face squarely my hesitancy: “Am I more eager to transform others, or to be transformed?” To be honest, transforming others sounds more appealing. But ecumenical leader Kinnamon affirms that when churches seek the means to understand unity even in diversity, they must be willing to discuss weaknesses as well as strengths. With the goal of clarity in conversation, I admit the need to acknowledge weaknesses and even to be transformed. But I also appreciate Kinnamon’s corollary: “Meaningful dialogue occurs when the people involved not only are knowledgeable about their faith but are committed to it, when what they believe provides fundamental orientation and motivation for their lives. Otherwise, why bother?”<sup>58</sup> With a clearer understanding of the origins of religious controversy and the objectives in committing to transformation, I am prepared to acknowledge my personal voice as a necessary part of this critical conversation.

Vulnerability is another obstacle. When I first considered presenting myself as a third conversation partner, I recoiled for fear of an onslaught from those harboring a predisposition against CS. American Religion scholar Stein explains that part of the intensity of this opposition stems from the honorable tradition dissent holds in a *political* context in America, whereas other religions challenge

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<sup>56</sup> Patte explains why hermeneutical questions cannot be fully eliminated from biblical interpretation: “My interests, concerns, and commitments raise the hermeneutical question of what the biblical texts *mean for us today*. As such they are legitimate, and can be critically explored and addressed.” Daniel Patte, “The Guarded Personal Voice of a Male European-American Biblical Scholar,” in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger (London: Routledge, 2003), 14.

<sup>57</sup> James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, eds., *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2000), 10.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Kinnamon, *Truth and Community: Diversity and its Limits in the Ecumenical Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 30.



our own way of life, our deepest values.<sup>59</sup> One of the cultural habits I inherited from the early CS movement was a tendency to hide from potentially inflammatory religious discourse.

My need for rejecting insularity, or functioning from within a bubble, became apparent when I was a student in a Christian seminary.<sup>60</sup> Finding intersections between minority and majority worldviews is always incumbent upon the minority, because the greater has no perceived need for the smaller. On first hearing my theological perspectives, my fellow seminarians immediately presumed my guilt associated with the heresies we had studied from antiquity. They judged me as dualist. But I thought *they* were dualists. They considered my views docetic, body-hating, anti-cosmic, and derived from the anti-Christ. I understood those views were associated with what we had been taught regarding Gnostics of the second century, but I never thought that way myself. Why would they jump to such wrong conclusions about my theology? The question inspired me to investigate early texts themselves, since I was implicated with the same heresies. With further investigation, I found most of the accusations to be serious distortions of the texts, at least the way I read them. As I learned the impact of epistemological perspectives, I realised the source of the tension. Neither side was dualist from the perspective of its own epistemology, but both were dualist from the opposite perspective. Both of us ironically became witness to and created a new dualism between us.

Finally, another significant obstacle to my participation in the conversation is my cultural distance from the nineteenth century, and even further from the second century. The attempt to converse across the millennia with those who experience a type of revelatory communication from God reminds me of the biblical account of Moses, Elijah, and Jesus speaking with one another in time and

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<sup>59</sup> Stephen Stein, *Communities of Dissent: A History of Alternative Religions in America* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), xi-xii.

<sup>60</sup> Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois

space.<sup>61</sup> Moses, Elijah, and Jesus had never met each other before they met on the mountain top, because they inhabited the earth during historically different eras. But Jesus's bringing his disciples – who were still wearing the 'cloak' of mortality – with him as witnesses implies an interesting cross section between two contrasting epistemological viewpoints. Peter, James, and John were terrified that in their worldview, this encounter should not have happened. Despite their fear, they glimpsed something of the heavenly vision while still living by earthly standards. This 'glimpse' is an example of where I see these two contradictory epistemologies intersecting.

All analogies break down somewhere, and the most obvious disconnect with this story is that, while I share an epistemological viewpoint with my conversation partners as Jesus might have experienced with Moses and Elijah, I do not claim any likeness to the spiritual altitude of Jesus's transfigured conversation partners! The story simply illustrates my role with conversation partners whose epistemology acknowledges God's direct communication.

## Traditional Christian Contribution to the Conversation on Healing

Although the conversation among the three texts constitutes the bulk of the thesis, its purpose is to facilitate the greater conversation dissolving the bubble that largely encloses the CS community. Identifying this 'traditional Christian conversation partner' is complicated by the fact that there is no monolithic traditional Christian view of non-medical healing. Rather, there are vastly more nuanced views of such healing among Christians than there are denominations.

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<sup>61</sup> See *Matt 17:1-9*, *Mark 9:2-10*, *Luke 9:28-36*. I recognise that the SBL Handbook does not italicise books of the Bible, but since these canonical books are used on the basis of equal authenticity with the extracanonical texts in this thesis, I will henceforth italicise all books of antiquity for the sake of consistency.

Whether a healing is considered a cure, a miracle, or a figment of the imagination, Christians navigate these meanings through faith, theological doctrine, culturally influenced worldviews, and personal experience.<sup>62</sup> Clearly, these perspectives multiply when other non-Christian faith traditions are factored in, but since the conversation among the three texts in this thesis occurs in the Christian context, the identity of this fourth conversation partner is confined to those identifying themselves as Christian. This additional Christian voice will speak more prominently in Chapter Eight.

The practice of Christian healing has been more than a ritual practice and belief by people seeking protection and escape from sickness and death. Ever since Jesus instructed his disciples to “cure the sick...The kingdom of God has come near to you” (NRSV Luke 10:9), Christian healing “has been a driving force in the construction of Christianity as an ongoing historical tradition.”<sup>63</sup> One of the most appealing features of Christianity during the period of early Christian development was its particular means of coping with suffering on the part of both sufferers and care-givers. But practices varied widely in early Christian communities: some viewed suffering as part of religious life, to the point of martyrdom; some sought to transcend pain; and still others performed exorcism and cures. For some theologians, sickness has been used as evidence of sinfulness; consequently healing involved repentance and forgiveness; other theologians have relied on the evidence of power through miraculous cures to prove their authority. A rich diversity of social experiences has also played a significant role in the understanding of Christian healing: some saw the transcendent authority of Christ as justification for killing others; others found therapeutic power in evicting

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<sup>62</sup> Graham H. Twelftree, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>63</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*. (Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

suspicious members of a community; and at the other extreme, some have found in the Eucharist a unifying measure of egalitarian friendships.<sup>64</sup>

In antiquity, the mainstream orthodox church embraced healing in a rather bureaucratic way, and after the first three centuries, regulation under church authority turned the Christian ethos toward moral theology and a linking to sacramental ministries.<sup>65</sup> The church as a whole continued to concern itself with various healing models throughout its history, but it was not until the eighteenth century that Schleiermacher conceived of systematising theological inquiry into a discipline of ‘applied theology.’ Church leadership still concentrated on the wellbeing of the church community, while healing – an individually oriented pastoral task – was one of the secondary elements of church priorities.<sup>66</sup> The twentieth century sharpened its focus on the specific practical meaning of the relationship between theology and healing and broadened its perspective on Christian healing, nursing, and caring.

A couple of specific recent examples illustrate the diversity of the meaning of Christian healing. Thirty-five years ago, Morris Maddocks offered a new model of the relationship between healing and church. He envisioned the Lord of the Church extending “a commission to exalt in our time the healing of Christ universally.”<sup>67</sup> He required a conversation across national, cultural, ecclesiastical and disciplinary divides, but his starting place for the links was where ‘the Lord of the Church had called.’ Healing would occur only at that place. He could arrange for conversation with people everywhere, but unlike the traditional starting place of either a human need or a theological position, it was the presence of the power

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<sup>64</sup> Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 4-7.

<sup>65</sup> Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 2-3.

<sup>66</sup> Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 24.

<sup>67</sup> Morris Maddocks, *The Christian Healing Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1981), xi.

of Christ healing that caused the healing action. Healing, for Maddocks, was not only an event that took place in an individual's body, but the evidence of God's commission at work on earth.

Another church-related view of healing appeared in a more recent study of global Pentecostalism and charismatic healing. Pentecostalism is more than a religious movement that happens to emphasise healing and that has spread. Rather, global forces larger than the movement itself have caused its rapid and widespread growth. The general fear of disease illustrates the non-denominational boundaries of such religious growth. Brown explains the connection: "[G]lobalization characteristically heightens the threat of disease, thereby fueling the growth of religious movements such as Pentecostalism that are centrally concerned with healing." Fear of disease defies boundaries, but such fear "seems still more boundless in the realm of the imagination."<sup>68</sup> Pentecostal healing envelops people's lives, because it involves more than relief from physical suffering; it is a worldview that combines material reality, economic reality, and invocations of spiritual power.<sup>69</sup>

Sandnes's claims that current New Testament scholarship has now abandoned much of historical criticism's rationalistic approach (which cast doubt on the historicity of Biblical stories), represents yet another modern shift of thought regarding the understanding of healing. It is more profitable, he argues, to consider "how Christians have remembered and may still viably understand the healing ministry of Jesus" and how by doing so, "God may be seen to have a healing presence in the world."<sup>70</sup> For example, he disputes Pilch's 'social illness

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<sup>68</sup> Candy Gunther Brown, ed., *Global Pentecostalism and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 6-7.

<sup>69</sup> Brown, *Global Pentecostalism and Charismatic Healing*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Henriksen, Jan-Olav and Karl Olav Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer: A Gospel for the Body* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 3, 5.

theory' that Jesus only healed socially constructed illnesses,<sup>71</sup> but never cured bio-medically defined diseases.<sup>72</sup> He also disagrees with Theissen's model of Jesus's discovery of the power of faith as a prototype of the so-called placebo effect, because as Sandnes argues, Jesus's methodology differs significantly from the regularity of actions over time or the combination of a person's brain, mind, emotions and body known to operate together in placebo events.<sup>73</sup> Instead of explaining away the New Testament stories of healing physical bodies, Sandnes argues that the purpose of the stories is both didactic and a demonstration of the power of God.<sup>74</sup> Jesus's power of healing did not cease when he left earth, as argued by cessationists Augustine and Chrysostom, but rather Paul demonstrates how Jesus was the example for subsequent generations.<sup>75</sup>

However, historical criticism, while more complicated than Sandnes's arguments, is much easier for the bio-medically trained Western mind to accept. Although some, such as New Age and Christian charismatic groups, strongly emphasise Jesus as healer, Sandnes argues that their lack of theological warrants for their claims does not advance the understanding of healing beyond supernatural reality or an expression of the miraculous.<sup>76</sup>

Rediger, who holds both medical and theological degrees, agrees with Sandnes's argument that miraculous behavior offers no useful means for understanding the relationship between God and the human situation. His commentary on a recent real-life healing story of a young girl named Anna argues

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<sup>71</sup> Further discussion of Pilch's arguments is in Chapter Six, "Healing in Antiquity: the difference in Jesus's healings," "The Causes and Sources of Illness;" and Chapter Eight, "Evidence of Healing in Antiquity."

<sup>72</sup> Henriksen and Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer*, 26-8.

<sup>73</sup> Henriksen and Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer*, 51-5.

<sup>74</sup> Henriksen and Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer*, 81,

<sup>75</sup> Henriksen and Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer*, 107.

<sup>76</sup> Henriksen and Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer*, 4.

that religious people generally use ‘miracle,’ while scientists call the same events ‘spontaneous remission’ or ‘placebo response.’ She had suffered from an incurable illness and was ‘inexplicably healed’ following a nearly fatal accident. Rediger believes “that miracles only contradict what we know of nature at this point in time.” From his study of more than one hundred remarkably cured individuals, he concludes “unequivocally that much of physical reality, remarkable as it may sound, is created in our minds....Miracles actually are consistent with mental and spiritual laws that we are only beginning to study.”<sup>77</sup>

This small sampling of Christian healing practices only hints at the range of theologies, practices, and experiences relevant to an understanding of ‘healing,’ and all of them constitute the conversation partner in the larger conversation with the three texts in this thesis, which will take place in Chapter Eight.

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<sup>77</sup> Jeffrey Rediger, "Harvard Medical School professor says 'Miracles from Heaven' and other remarkable cures could be real," *The Washington Post*, 29 March 2016. Rediger is an instructor at Harvard Medical School with a master's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary.

## Chapter Two: Conversation Methodology

A significant breakthrough for this thesis is the discovery of hidden difficulties in arranging meaningful conversations on the subject of healing between CS with today's Christians and early Christianity. In this chapter I will describe the relevant historic development of PT that relates to these difficulties and their solutions, the role of conversation in PT methodology, and the specific advantages, problems, and solutions addressed in this thesis.

PT, a combination of religious belief, tradition, and practice, includes a methodology well suited to arrange for a “mutually enriching, intellectually critical, and practically transforming”<sup>78</sup> conversation. In this case, the study of religious beliefs exposed the distinct challenge for CS to be in critical dialogue with anyone. In a sense, CS theology teaches there is only one way to think about the world, because God reveals the only truth. While that belief is helpful for spiritual growth and healing, it obfuscates meaningful engagement with the world. It would argue that the examination of anything outside its own faith traditions contradicts its own truth claims. On the other hand, as PT teaches from a social science perspective, even Eddy's communication with the world succeeded because she was in dialogue with the world of her day. Even though PT searches for knowledge from an epistemology that contrasts with CS, its perspectivism<sup>79</sup> does provide the means for *addressing* contradictory epistemologies.

This critical conversation methodology provides the means for accommodating the CS worldview within a contrasting one and explores the

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<sup>78</sup> Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology*, 12.

<sup>79</sup> Clinical pastoral perspectivism aims to improve pastoral practice through understanding the needs and concerns of persons it seeks to help. Rodney J. Hunter, ed. *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Expanded Edition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 182.



meaning of the theologies and practices of healing in the two historical texts.

Historically, the evolution of PT leads toward a clearer, more profound understanding of the intersection between the human and divine where healing takes place.

## Relevant Historic Development of PT Methodology

The following historical overview of the development of the field of PT illustrates how it enables research into the living relationship between theology and human experience. The first signs of practical theology (or ‘pastoral theology’)<sup>80</sup> in the Christian world appeared in the first two centuries of the Common Era when Christian communities were known to care for and inspire one another by building up faith through healing, teaching, and staying unified. During the next fifteen hundred years, the church institutionalised apostolic ministries and regulation under its own authority, resulting in a type of moral theology with pastoral care, but not necessarily healing.<sup>81</sup>

The first major move toward the modern understanding of PT was initiated by the German Reformed theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Now considered the ‘Father’ of PT within the academy, Schleiermacher’s most transformative contribution was his practical application of theological truth or insight to the wellbeing of the church community. Relying on both theological and philosophical guidance, he thought that both church governance and

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<sup>80</sup> According to Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 1-3, pastoral theology and practical theology are sometimes used synonymously, and sometimes mean something quite different from each other. Pastoral theology is the older term, going back to the earliest history of the Christian community and referring to the community commitment to “guide, heal, reconcile, and sustain that community.” Practical theology emerged in the German Protestant tradition in the late eighteenth century, subsuming pastoral care and extending beyond it to worship, preaching, and church government.

<sup>81</sup> Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward. *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 2-3.

individually-oriented pastoral tasks could share the responsibility of healing, teaching and preaching.<sup>82</sup>

The line of succession following Schleiermacher includes such theologians as Anton Boisen, Paul Tillich, Seward Hiltner, Don Browning, David Tracy, and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore. Turning attention to the value of the individual, Boisen (1876-1965) considered the religious beliefs and moral life of the believer to be of greater importance than the religious tradition itself.<sup>83</sup> His combined personal experience as both a patient with psychiatric illness and a clinical pastoral educator gave poignant witness to the need for voices of the marginalised to be heard within their own contexts.<sup>84</sup> In the 1930s he founded Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), which insists on the merits of real life situations, and introduced the concept of pastoral theology as ‘living human documents rather than books,’ or the study of humans alongside theology.<sup>85</sup> Thus the healing of people formed a distinct link between theology and the human condition.

Like Boisen, Tillich (1886-1965) was eager for people to live their theology authentically.<sup>86</sup> His method of ‘correlation’ – correlating the Christian message with the ever-moving human situation<sup>87</sup> – accentuated theology’s coincidence with human experience. Salvation was more than theological escape from sin’s punishment, because it had to transform the whole of human experience, and this correlation between salvation and wholeness, or healing, is one of the major themes in this thesis. “When salvation has cosmic significance, healing is not only

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<sup>82</sup> Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 24.

<sup>83</sup> Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 51.

<sup>84</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, 42.

<sup>85</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, see esp. 26, 308.

<sup>86</sup> Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 154.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), 8, 60, 61, as quoted in Ed L. Miller and Stanley J. Grenz, *Fortress Introduction to Contemporary Theologies* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998), 57.

included in it, *but salvation can be described as the act of 'cosmic healing.'* ....

Salvation is basically and essentially healing, the re-establishment of a whole that was broken, disrupted, disintegrated.”<sup>88</sup> This relationship between healing and salvation appears prominently in *SRJ* and *S&H*, and will be analysed more fully in Chapter Six.

Extending Tillich's correlation method to a more active 'two-way street,' Hiltner (1909-1984) conceived new insights from cultural information beyond the Christian discourse.<sup>89</sup> For him pastoral theology was best understood through a 'shepherding perspective,' through healing, sustaining, and guiding. He concurred with Tillich that pastoral theologians can learn from contact with other disciplines that study shepherding, such as psychiatry and clinical psychology, but argued that pastoral theologians must distinguish themselves by “beginning with theological questions, bringing them to the shepherding material, and returning either with theological answers or with new theological questions.”<sup>90</sup>

Although pastoral ministries had become somewhat dissociated from theological discourse when Schleiermacher systematised Christian theology into subdisciplines, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed a reinvigorated theology that ultimately became firmly incorporated into the human condition. By the 1960s Tillich, Hiltner, and other so-called 'secular' theologians had turned the course of theology from the nature of God and a world beyond this one to human activity within human-created language and conditions. Various liberation

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<sup>88</sup> Paul Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health." Pages 16-52 in *The Meaning of Health: Essays in Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, and Religion*, ed., Perry LeFevre (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1946), 16-17.

<sup>89</sup> Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1958), 223, as quoted in Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 158.

<sup>90</sup> Hiltner, "The Meaning and Importance of Pastoral Theology," *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, as quoted in Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 40-41.

theologies contributed to the growing impetus in PT toward lived experience, practice, and response to human needs.<sup>91</sup>

The second major shift in PT turned theologians more consciously away from its earlier narrow focus on personal problems and toward a more expansive theme of ‘public theology.’ Whereas Browning (1934-2010) insisted on a more explicitly normative theological discipline, the impact of pluralism forced many religious communities out of their self-imposed insularity. As more responsibility and authority fell to care-givers such as priests, doctors, and psychotherapists, their influence on society extended well beyond their patients.<sup>92</sup>

Catholic theologian Tracy (b. 1939)<sup>93</sup> envisioned ‘mutually critical correlations’ between Christian tradition in particular ecclesial communities and ever-shifting cultural, political, ethical, and religious situations;<sup>94</sup> and finally by the 1980s he claimed that society, rather than the academy or church, had become the primary audience for practical theologians.<sup>95</sup> If there are points of commonality between Christian perspectives and cultural expression, there must also be dissimilarities. And in that case, Christian theologies must also be willing to be revised – which anticipates today’s expectation of transformation by practical theologians.

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<sup>91</sup> Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 65.

<sup>92</sup> Mark Hestenes, "The Early Browning: Pastoral Care in a Pluralistic Age and the Method of Practical Moral Inquiry." *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 68, no. 2, Art. #1211 (2012), 2.

<sup>93</sup> That David Tracy was Browning’s contemporary and fellow professor at the University of Chicago School of Divinity is evidence of the influence of the University of Chicago School of Divinity in the development of PT.

<sup>94</sup> David Tracy, as quoted in Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling, eds. *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 139.

<sup>95</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, 71.

## The Meaning of the ‘Web’<sup>96</sup> in Current PT Methodology

‘Applied theology’<sup>97</sup> became one of the early twentieth-century trends that arose from Schleiermacher’s application of theological truths to human needs, but later theologies of liberation welcomed marginalised voices rather than moulding them into a prescribed theology. Boisen’s popular CPE strengthened the idea of uniquely lived theology and gave rise to the ‘living human document’ metaphor.<sup>98</sup> More recently, a more integrated and inductive approach to theology fused theory (or systematic theology) with practice (or pastoral studies).<sup>99</sup>

Simultaneously with the introduction of the World Wide Web, a new metaphor of a theological ‘web’ replaced the notion of ‘document’ and reflected the increasing interconnectedness between theology and human situations. The ‘living human web,’ a term coined by Miller-McLemore, was a new development in pastoral theology which represented the shift from care narrowly defined as counseling to a broader understanding of it. Not too surprisingly, though, the growing interdependence of theology and secular forms of therapy began to confuse the identity of pastoral theology itself.<sup>100</sup> But the pastoral theology curriculum in seminaries continued to broaden, and the web concept characterised the impact of including the cultural, social, and religious context.

While the ‘web’ continues to serve as a useful metaphor to support care in wider communities, its shortcomings should also be noted. Most importantly, it

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<sup>96</sup> The ‘web’ is used metaphorically in PT to refer to a complex movement of relationships of thoughts and actions. Although it was conceived as an apt description of an approach for PT around the same time the ‘World Wide Web’ was developed as a means of wireless communication in the mid-twentieth century, these two webs should not be confused with one another.

<sup>97</sup> Applied theology refers to the notion that “principles are acquired through, for example, study of the Bible or of Christian doctrine and that these are applied in one-way fashion to acts and functions.” Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 31.

<sup>98</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, 42-48.

<sup>99</sup> Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 2-4.

<sup>100</sup> Charles Gerkin named this issue the ‘root question’ facing the pastoral care and counseling movement: how could pastoral theology be both a genuinely theological and a scientifically psychological discipline? Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, 30.

complicates the ministry and teaching of CPE itself by extending beyond the human document, which is so essential to the work of CPE. Without understanding personal experience and subjectivity, pastoral theologians lose their ability to read a situation and respond faithfully. So, a better metaphor, Miller-McLemore now claims, should be the ‘human document within the web,’<sup>101</sup> which maintains the human document and acknowledges the necessity of the complexities of the web metaphor.

Web relationships move in all directions and demonstrate the action of influence, but the postmodern web appears to be clarifying diffuse identities and purposes. Pattison observes that since each religious act is performed by someone who lives in a particular faith system and worldview, religious practice cannot even exist without its context.<sup>102</sup> These web-like relationships between religion and human experience demonstrate how theology is made practical by the needs of society – the people who call on theologians to answer questions. And theological answers in turn enable people to change their behavior in order to live together harmoniously. I am making use of this PT methodology of the ‘human document within the web’ and using an autoethnographic mode to bring my healing experience into the theological conversation and to seek theological insights that can contribute to the wider understanding of Christian healing.

## The Role of Conversation in PT Methodology

Conversations correspond with the design of webs, because, unlike formal dialogues, they do not necessarily proceed in one forward direction, and more importantly they do not presuppose the opinions and knowledge of conversation

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<sup>101</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, see esp. 26, 47, 48.

<sup>102</sup> Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 284.

partners. Conversation as theological methodology serves the needs of practical theologians to critically relate contemporary experience and practice to theological insights and traditions, both inside and outside the faith community.<sup>103</sup> 'Applied theology,' forcing a modern situation into conformity with an outmoded one, negates the worth of the modern or contemporary human experience. Therefore, conversation, which is a more dialectical activity, contradicts the methodology that held sacred texts or revered older practices above the insights of the present. Critical conversation, then, requires a meaningful balance of three sources of theological input: a) one's own beliefs and assumptions; b) beliefs stemming from Christian community and tradition; and c) the contemporary situation under consideration.

For this thesis I adopt critical conversation using these three sources as the structure that will provide substantial theological meaning.<sup>104</sup> Current experiences ask questions of theology and tradition; theology is elevated to current relevance; and tradition is transformed by the adjustments in both. Such conversation prevents a single human circumstance, a sacred tradition, or anyone's private convictions from overshadowing. But it does necessitate flexibility and adaptation to the ever-changing concerns of the community. Induction, rather than deduction, is required to accommodate the shift from authoritative principles, texts, and models to the careful analysis of a current experience.

Similarities in conversation are valuable for the discovery of harmony, but transformation occurs at the point of dissimilarity where people confront new realities that require them to adapt their symbolic universes.<sup>105</sup> Anyone attempting to understand a contemporary issue theologically will necessarily change his or her

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<sup>103</sup> Pattison, *Shame*, 9.

<sup>104</sup> Stephen Pattison, "Some Straw for the Bricks: A Basic Introduction to Theological Reflection," pages 135-45 in Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 136.

<sup>105</sup> Jan Gabriel van der Watt, "My Reading of 1 John in Africa." *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation*. Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, ed (London: Routledge, 2003), 148.

view of the world and even himself or herself, because there is no static human situation. These changes are always transformative, causing new ways of behaving in response to multi-directional conversations.<sup>106</sup> But most significantly for the evolution of PT, the ways of thinking about new phenomena will also be altered to some degree. While PT tends to relativise the importance of the illuminating past, it is only for the sake of the present that interpretations of the past are to be studied. For these reasons, the conversation I am organising is unique, because this moment in time and my unique experience determine the place to begin.

## Methodological Problems and Solutions

Although critical conversation has its own limitations, such as the potential for adjusting for imbalance, gaps, and some level of misunderstanding,<sup>107</sup> I have turned to PT methodology to advance the conversation on Christian healing for two fundamental reasons: (1) the commonality between my own Christian healing practice and PT's commitment to helping people from the basis of Christian theology; (2) PT's evolution toward conversation methodology that has broken conversation barriers and that supports the critical discovery of commonalities and differences. In this thesis the PT methodology of critical conversation succeeds in evoking hidden problems that needed to be addressed in relationships between the texts themselves and with contemporary mainstream Christians. I will identify five of the most vexing problems and why their solutions led to greater understanding among all conversation partners. They are presented in the order in which they appeared during the development of the conversation.

1. The two historical texts selected as conversation partners in this thesis represent vast cultural differences but similar theological ideas. The reasons for

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<sup>106</sup> Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 10.

<sup>107</sup> For further examples of the limitations of critical conversation, particularly the potential to have only limited validity and relevance, see Pattison, "Some Straw for Bricks," 142-3.



selecting these texts were explained in Chapter One, but their unusual differences and commonalities presented methodological difficulties. How *does* a theological text of the second-century Greco-Roman world compare with that of the nineteenth-century American religious world? Languages, extreme distances in time and space, and political, religious, social, health, and scientific views are nearly incomparable. Ironically, the greatest oddity is the strangely similar theological message that emerges in both. What can be made of this phenomenon, when neither author knew the other, and their ideas were born in such contrasting cultural settings? One suggestion is DeConick's argument from a cognitive perspective that "the human mind can only construct so many answers to any given historical moment."<sup>108</sup> It is natural for them to repeat themselves. Secondly, Eddy argues that her discovery is reinstating 'primitive' Christianity's lost element of healing by claiming a universal (and eternal) Principle.<sup>109</sup> Distinctions between similarities and differences are difficult to make when the theological claim may or may not transcend cultural influences.

2. PT conversation begins with a contemporary situation, and in this conversation, my contemporary practice serves as a conversation partner, subject to critical evaluation. I engage in the conversation of this thesis reflexively, since my voice serves as data resource, and information from this voice feeds into the entire picture. But it can be problematic for me to step outside of my subjective views sufficiently to allow the critical conversation to take its own course. In my role as researcher, I must guard against seeing my personal experience as guarantor of truth and exercise the courage to be trustworthy and honest.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> April D. DeConick, "Crafting Gnosis: Gnostic Spirituality in the Ancient New Age." Pages 285-305 in *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World*. Edited by John Corrigan, Tuomas Rasimus. *Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies*, eds., Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 302.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Manual of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts*. 89th ed. (Boston, MA: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1895), 17.

<sup>110</sup> Walton, *Writing Methods in Theological Reflection*, xxix and 6.

Some critics who are uncomfortable with autoethnography replacing a historical critical approach and are skeptical of PT's academic rigor may have overlooked its requirement that self be properly placed within any critical dialogue and that problem-based, intuitive and integrating skills be used.<sup>111</sup> An expert practitioner of reflexivity avoids judgment or psychological analysis of individual human circumstances and requires of participants good listening, flexibility, and willingness to be transformed. The academic success of a critical conversation is dependent on the discipline of reflexivity, rather than the looseness of its structure.

3. Comparing religions is complex and difficult, and although this thesis is structured as a conversation rather than a comparison, some of the classic issues arise in conversation as well. Weber's social science, for example, rejects traditional natural sciences but adopts a phenomenological approach to understand 'ideal types.'<sup>112</sup> But such models obstruct the research value of conversation and tend to verify modern insights from ancient texts. However, conversation based on worldviews in *S&H* and *SRJ* is also problematic, because worldviews are putatively socially constructed, and one cannot naturally 'share' worldviews from extremely different cultural contexts. Yet the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* both teach the importance of rejecting the 'rulers of this world' (or, worldly influences) and seeking moment-by-moment guidance from the divine wisdom; they claim to construct ideal worldviews free of human weaknesses.

The phrase 'action-guiding worldviews' indicates how everyone in a relationship with someone else, from business managers to theologians, functions within certain kinds of ideas, rituals, practices, and words that are "not necessarily internally consistent, empirically verifiable or rationally based," but powerfully

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<sup>111</sup> Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 4.

<sup>112</sup> Ivan Strenski, *Thinking about Religion: An Historical Introduction to Theories of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 212-3.

binding.<sup>113</sup> While it is true that the theologies of both *SRJ* and *S&H* provide ideas, rituals, and practices that are powerfully binding, the identification of this phenomenon as a ‘worldview’ for either author is misleading. Prayer in *S&H*, for example, consciously shuts the door on human will and physical sensation to discern most clearly the divine ideas. In this thesis, I will refer to the ‘worldviews’ for lack of a better rubric for those ideas and practices, but I note that *socially* constructed worldviews cannot converse with one another, whereas conversations regarding ideas that originate outside the social order might be different. This thesis attempts to distinguish between those ideas which claim to originate from God and those from social influences.

The meaning of ‘mind’ is an example of the overlap between a culturally influenced worldview through human language and the epistemological perspective of an intelligent divine source. The creating God in *S&H* is known as ‘Mind,’ or sometimes ‘Spirit’ or ‘Father-Mother.’ In *SRJ*, the creative source is usually referred to as ‘Invisible Spirit,’ and it functions in a similar manner to the Mind of *S&H*.<sup>114</sup> The difference in the usage of the term ‘mind’ (or *nous*) in the two different centuries and its more frequent use in the nineteenth century indicate that the terms *nous* and mind are not precisely synonymous in ancient Mediterranean culture and nineteenth-century English. Such cultural differences account for the variety of expressions of this one Mind/Invisible Spirit, but they do not necessarily imply contrasting worldviews.

4. A ‘worldview’ based on resources in God and a ‘worldview’ based on social influences have nearly incompatible epistemological differences. The greatest difficulties in setting up the conversation for this thesis included realising

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<sup>113</sup> Stephen Pattison, *Faith of the Managers: When Management Becomes Religion* (London: Cassell, 1997), 1-2.

<sup>114</sup> The means and methods of Spirit’s (Mind’s) creative power is explained more fully in Chapter Four, “Mind, the Creator for *SRJ* and *S&H*.”

the conflicting nature of these epistemologies and their impact on conversation, and discovering the means for dealing with conflicting epistemologies.

Davies describes two models of religion that succinctly represent the source of tension between these two epistemological views. They are so foundational to the structure of the conversation in this thesis, I quote liberally:

There appear to be two fundamental metaphors in religion, two basic ways that the divine reality can be modeled after human reality. The first is a social-model religion; it is the model or set of metaphors with which we are most familiar. ... God is said to be Father, King, or Judge. God sends messengers, passes judgment, rewards, and punishes. ... All such ideas and metaphors are drawn from human social interaction. ... What counts most is correct interpersonal behavior between God and humanity and between people in human society.

The second metaphorical scheme is the mind-model religion. The universe, the whole of reality, and especially the Divine are thought to be like a mind. Mental terms become the dominant form of metaphor. Key terms are *mind, word, wisdom, thought, reason*, and so forth. ... Salvation comes through knowledge, insight and meditation rather than through proper behavior, obedience and agreement with established dogma.<sup>115</sup>

The second model accurately describes my epistemological perspective and what I discern in *SRJ* and *S&H*, but I would name it a ‘Mind-model’ instead of ‘mind-model.’<sup>116</sup> Eddy’s epistemological view is that “Thought passes from God to man\*, but neither sensation nor report goes from material body to Mind.”<sup>117</sup> Often citing *Prov 3:5-7*<sup>118</sup> for both prayer and guidance, she insisted this theological alignment with God is necessary for healing. The author of *SRJ* narrates the battle between powers for control over humanity, and the successful Saviour\* awakens those who

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<sup>115</sup> Stevan Davies, *The Secret Book of John: The Gnostic Gospel Annotated and Explained* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005), xviii-xix.

<sup>116</sup> I distinguish between ‘Mind’ and ‘mind’ where a capitalised ‘Mind’ refers to God, and the lower case ‘mind’ refers to human minds. And again, I recognize the difficulty of the use of ‘model’ as a potentially anachronistic distortion of a non-socially constructed worldview.

<sup>117</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 284.

<sup>118</sup> *Prov 3:5-7*: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.”

were deceived by the false powers to return to the supreme authority of the original Creator.

Davies claims these two religion models (social-model and mind-model) are fundamentally incompatible.<sup>119</sup> I counter his claim through an *understanding* of their epistemological perspectives, not through a comparison of models. The academic field of PT has now evolved to be broad enough to identify and encompass *any* contemporary situation, even contrasting epistemologies. PT methodology, evolving from a Schleiermacher-liberation theology-mainstream perspective, is not an obstruction to conversation, but is well suited to function as a conversation broker. As researcher aware of the distinction between the two worldviews, I ‘borrow’ the majority epistemological language.

5. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven, quantum mechanics denies the existence of a physically real world independent of its observation.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, the ideas in the second-century *SRJ* and nineteenth-century *S&H* reject empirically derived data as the basis of a physically real world. Eddy challenges the logic of the classical physics’ version for how the world works with her treatment of disease through consciousness; and physicists now declare that quantum mechanics challenges this view of reality.<sup>121</sup> But physicists also concede that “the worldview demanded by quantum theory is not only stranger than we might suppose, it’s stranger than we *can* suppose.”<sup>122</sup> Whether this non-physical

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<sup>119</sup> Davies, *The Secret Book of John*, xix.

<sup>120</sup> Wheeler, a noted physicist, observed in a lecture, “In the real world of quantum physics, no elementary phenomenon is a real phenomenon until it is an observed phenomenon.” John Archibald Wheeler, “Frontiers of Time” (lecture, International School of Physics “Enrico Fermi,” LXXII Course, Varenna, IT, Austin, TX, 1-5 August 1977), 10. Also available at <https://jawarchive.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/frontiers-of-time-19781.pdf>.

<sup>121</sup> Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner. *Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33.

<sup>122</sup> Despite the strange conclusions that physicists draw in quantum mechanics, Rosenblum and Kuttner also emphasise how quantum theory is not merely one of many theories in physics, but it is *the* one theory that impacts every other field of physics. Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 5-6.

reality is a worldview, social science model, or epistemological perspective, and despite how logical it is, it is still difficult for modern Western thinkers to reason from consciousness as cause in matters of health and religion.

Returning briefly to the analogy with Jesus's conversation on the mountain, the image of an outside witness to the conversation – such as his attending disciples – wearing 'earthly cloaks' might be analogous to my taking on this other worldview in this thesis conversation. Jesus's conversation with people who transcended time and space would make sense in the epistemological view of the Mind-model of religion. But the disciples, who were confused by the image, might have tried to understand it from an 'earthly' perspectival or situational epistemology. Again, the analogy with the disciples as witness breaks down where the outside viewer could be considered an inferior viewer of a relationship with God. But in fact, my taking on the role as the outside observer in this conversation is a transformative one for me. In the perspectival role, I discern what this conversation means to the rest of the world. The disciples were in a unique position to discuss the meaning of the transfiguration with the world, *because of* their understanding of worldly views, and this is what I need.

## Chapter Three: Identification of Three Themes

My experience with healing attracted me to the conversation between *SRJ* and *S&H*, where I discovered some common theological themes in both texts. These themes appeared differently, but they were persistent and consistent, and they matched my experience. They are (1) healing characteristics of God; (2) dealing with evil; and (3) the correlation of healing and salvation. With each patient, or case, I agree to take, I know I must be settled with the characteristics of God that will heal the situation; I need to confront all the devilish arguments against the patient's wellbeing; and I need to conceive the needed healing in the context of the individual's full salvation. Before I discovered *SRJ*, I had found these themes in *S&H*, which guided me to a deeper understanding and faith in the Bible's inspiring, healing import. When I realised the same themes dominate the message in *SRJ*, I realised how a conversation between them would deepen my understanding of canonical and extracanonical writings and consequently strengthen my faith in the theological basis of my healing practices.

### Three Themes in *S&H*

The first theme – the healing characteristics of God – presupposes certain ideas about God that need to be identified. Eddy claims her ideas of God come from her Bible study and revelation, and they consistently affirm God as the Mind causing and creating all being. God is therefore infinite and supreme, omnipotent and Love itself. In Biblical terms, Eddy affirmed “All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (*John 1:3*).<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Eddy quotes this passage several times in her published writings (using the translation of the standard version of her time), such as *Science and Health*, 231.

Discordant situations that need to be remedied are those things perceived to have slipped out of God's eternal authority and good will. So the healing of sin, disease, and even death is God's restoration to original harmony. Eddy's reasoning on the healing characteristics of God is as follows:

The fundamental propositions of divine metaphysics are summarized in the four following, to me, *self-evident* propositions. Even if reversed, these propositions will be found to agree in statement and proof, showing mathematically their exact relation to Truth. ...

1. God is All-in-all.
  2. God is good. Good is Mind.
  3. God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter.
  4. Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease. — Disease, sin, evil, death, deny good, omnipotent God, Life.
- Which of the denials in proposition four is true? Both are not, cannot be, true.<sup>124</sup>

The second theme – dealing with evil – is a natural corollary to the first, namely that the omnipresence and omnipotence of God deny any true power. The human experience of suffering from sin, disease, accident, or any form of evil is a misapprehension of the supremacy and goodness of God's presence. Eddy teaches the role of taking up one's cross to separate oneself from the worldly sources of evil and to welcome the crown of God's kingdom.<sup>125</sup>

The third theme – the correlation of healing and salvation – is also a necessary axiom for healing. Since sickness and sin originate from the same error (that something contrary to God's will could dominate humankind), they must be defeated by the same Christ. One of the six tenets of CS articulates Eddy's view that healing the sick and overcoming sin are, together, partial demonstrations of the full salvation of Christ.

We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through

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<sup>124</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 113.

<sup>125</sup> For a contemporary inspirational article on the application of Eddy's teaching about Jesus's cross, see Deborah Huebsch, "The crown and the cross," *Christian Science Sentinel* 118, no. 34 (2016): 19-21.



Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.<sup>126</sup>

### Three Themes in *SRJ*

Although I learned the essential role of these three themes for healing first in *S&H*, their appearance is even more evident in *SRJ* because the narrative form of *SRJ* depends on the order of these themes to develop its message.

The first portion (1:1 – 9:14), which constitutes over a third of the text of *SRJ*, identifies the Godhead as the single, all-powerful Spirit who is good. This God fills the same role as the God in *S&H* by establishing the supremacy, goodness, infinitude of God and God's creative powers. All the troubles of humankind will ultimately yield to this harmonious government. In *SRJ*, however, God's realm is expressed in oneness, but expands with realms within that realm. Each realm is introduced to illustrate more fully the depth, breadth, majesty, authority, and completeness of the One being.

The middle portion of the narrative (10:1 – 22:37) covers the issues of theme two – dealing with evil. It describes the tragic disruption of the heavenly realm through the action of the counterfeit spirit, or chief devil, Yaldabaoth\*. His actions represent the nature of evil (including deceptiveness, counterfeit power, arrogance, ignorance and cruelty) as it appears to function in the mind, physical body, and the larger socio-political body. The battle between the omnipotence of the One and the counterfeit claim to power by Yaldabaoth plays out in the human body and the story of salvation\*.

The third and final portion of the text (23:1 – 27:16) recounts in narrative form and with question-and-answer rhetorical style the salvific message of *SRJ*. The Saviour, who takes on multiple forms, rescues those who have fallen under

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<sup>126</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 497.

the control of the counterfeit spirit. Suffering from sinful behavior and bodily pain are treated the same way, and the Saviour repeatedly returns in some form to humanity's place of suffering until the full salvation from sin, pain, and death are granted. The body's healing is part of the full story of salvation.

In summary, Part One sets the stage for the critical conversation which is designed to explore and critique ideas and methods related to Christian healing from antiquity to the modern era. Although the two historical texts I have selected for conversation partners are separated by millennia, many thousands of miles, and languages unknown to each other, both *SRJ* and *S&H* claim their roots in Christian origins and seek to alleviate human suffering through theologies of healing and salvation. The PT structure of this thesis also requires input from my healing practice and experience, because PT values human experience as a valid source for data. The PT methodology exposes problems particular to this conversation, but the solution to these problems leads to the fuller understanding of healing through critical conversation. Finding the means for putting these texts in conversation with each other enhances my own experience with the three themes, because the ideas most essential to healing are expressed more fully with an alternate view, and whatever is tied to cultural meaning in my experience can be dropped as easily as I see its irrelevance in the historical texts.

## Part Two: Critical Conversation with Themes

The most notable feature of the conversation between *SRJ* and *S&H* is that they tell almost the same story. The author of *SRJ* represents it in narrative form and Eddy in textbook form, but the story-line is clear in both texts: humans have lost their way and are suffering, but Jesus, the Saviour has come to earth to rescue them. How are we to be saved? Both authors comfort their readers with not only the promise of the Messiah's salvation but also detailed explanation of how to understand it and participate in it. Salvation is not a hope for future and eternal life but an ongoing experience of healing and awakening until it is fully understood and realised.

The drama of the story unfolds in three consecutive episodes in *SRJ*. First is a strong image of God's kingdom where God's omnipotence and goodness reign unchallenged. Second, the disruption of harmony is portrayed through the characters of Sophia and her offspring. Finally, the Saviour acts to save humankind from sin and suffering, and offers final explanations concerning salvation.

*S&H* begins with a description of prayer as an absolute faith that all things – including salvation from sin and sickness – are possible to God. Eddy's message is structured as a guide for human thought, from the Saviour's (Jesus's) prayer through steps leading up to a full disclosure of the 'Science of Being' where God is found to be omnipresent, omnipotent good. And finally specific instructions are laid out for active participation in Jesus's healing and saving mission.

The logic of healing is the same as the logic of salvation in both texts: that God, good, reigns and is supreme; that the disruption of God's perfect creation causes human suffering; and that the Saviour continuously awakens us to the

ongoing reality of God's love and care until we experience the full salvation. The conversation for this thesis follows the narrative outline of *SRJ*, since the three themes fit the same pattern.

## Chapter Four: Theme One – Healing Characteristics of God

Theme one identifies the healing characteristics of God and how they function in human experience. Both authors affirm God's supremacy as the defining logic behind the power to heal and save humankind. This God is defined beyond corporeal measurement such as time, but remains linked to humanity through awakening them to their own limitless being. The following conversation on theme one discusses three major healing characteristics of God (the unchangeable nature of God's realm, the creative power of God, and the omnipotence of God) and the dualist claim against an omnipotent creator God. First, the narrative interpretation of the first theme in *SRJ* sets the stage for conversation.

### Interpretation of *SRJ* Narrative, Theme One

The prologue opens with a post-resurrection vision of Jesus\* coming to comfort John (Jesus's disciple) with answers to his troubling questions. The Saviour's answers – the rest of the text – constitute the first known "writing to formulate a comprehensive narrative of Christian theology, cosmology, and

salvation.”<sup>127</sup> The divine realm is established with the supreme and infinite God\* declaring absolute authority. This second-century Godhead is depicted as Father, Mother, and Son (7:1-6) and is immaterial, both young and old. The ‘One’ who is too great to be fully expressed by the human mind is complete, perfect, eternal, and unlimited in every way (4:1-38).

Creation occurs through the divine Spirit/Mind’s knowing, or ‘gazing’/‘staring’ (6:2-15). “Its thinking became a thing” (5:13). Mind, which is neither corporeal nor gendered, creates by the act of thinking rather than through procreation, which needs bodies and the distinction of gender. The perfect Human<sup>128</sup> now appears, as the first of four categories of humanity (9:3): Adam, the perfect and ideal, who becomes the model whom the counterfeit creator tries to copy, and the other three, representing varying degrees of closeness to the divine image. But evil’s existence and power need explanation. It is ontologically a mockery of the divine goodness, a supposed opposite of it.<sup>129</sup> Its claim to power is its ability to use mental trickery to wrest the control of humanity from the divine creator.

Sophia\* (wisdom) is one of the aeons\* in the heavenly realm (8:12), or spiritually manifested beings, that came forth from the Father-Mother Being. In a perversion of her natural state of wisdom, she ignorantly and willfully wishes for an offspring without her male partner’s consent (10:1-5). The result is a mocking, grotesque creature, Yaldabaoth (10:6-12), who ignorantly and enviously wants to be the supreme creator. “For he said, ‘I am God and no other god exists except me,’ since he is ignorant of the place from which his strength had come” (10:19,

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<sup>127</sup> Karen King, *The Secret Revelation of John*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>128</sup> King and others adopt the system of using capital ‘H’ to distinguish between the perfect Human of the heavenly realm and the human constructed by the ignorant, counterfeit creator.

<sup>129</sup> In the end, this ‘creator God’ who mocks the Divine Realm “is exposed as powerless to bring his plans to successful fruition.... Each move the creator makes prompts a countermove from the Divine Realm to rescue humanity,...In this process, the *Genesis* story is transformed into a spiritual struggle between the Divine Realm and the world rulers for the souls of humanity.” King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 96-97.

11:5, 12:12-13). His counterfeit identity parodies the true God. But Sophia is the ideal character in the creation myth to enact this chicanery, because wisdom was most needed to detect and annihilate his fraudulence.<sup>130</sup>

## God's Realm Beyond Time and Agitation

There is no evidence that Mircea Eliade knew of the work of Eddy or of *SRJ*, but his 1954 work, *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or Cosmos and History*, creates a useful bridge between the second-century *SRJ* and the nineteenth-century *S&H* views of the meaning of reality and timelessness. He identifies a type of ontology prevalent in 'pre-modern' societies (also called 'traditional man'), spanning Asia, Europe, and America whose "conceptions of being and reality ...can be read" from their behaviour.<sup>131</sup> As will be demonstrated, these ideas are consistent with *SRJ* and *S&H* views of God's realm. Eliade has been strongly criticised for his 'creative hermeneutic' style, seeking meanings even if they are not there,<sup>132</sup> but his observations regarding the meaning of time are insightful for this study. He explains that for 'traditional man' reality functions as the imitation of a celestial archetype; rituals and everyday actions acquire meaning through deliberate repeating of such acts "posited *ab origine* by gods, heroes, or

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<sup>130</sup> King maintains a split in the identity of Wisdom, represented by higher and lower characters, Pronoia and Sophia. "Pronoia is the primary savior figure in the text, bringing revelation and the power of the divine Spirit to humanity, but she does so mostly through her emissaries Autogenes-Christ and Epinoia, each of whom takes on some of the associations of Wisdom. Sophia, on the other hand, is a less positive figure, not only because her actions mirror those of the Biblical Eve, but because she is associated with the creation of the lower world." (King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 226.) On the other hand, the sorrowful consequences of Sophia's tragic disruption of harmonious unity of the Divine Realm in *SRJ* can overshadow her ultimate salvific contributions. Her repentance enabled her to reappear in her original state, and she was consequently in a position to do battle with the counterfeit spirit. Thus, although other second-century texts emphasise blaming Sophia for the source of evil, in this text, her function retains the Jewish sense of saving Wisdom.

<sup>131</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask, 2005 ed., Bollingen Series (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>132</sup> Strenski, *Thinking about Religion*, 325.

ancestors.”<sup>133</sup> This dependence on the origin for meaning, reality, and guidance characterises the importance of Theme One for this conversation between *SRJ* and *S&H*.

Salvation in both cases relies on the ‘imitation of a celestial archetype.’

About one third of *SRJ* is devoted to a detailed account of the one supreme Being and the realm in which everything exists in perpetual harmonious relation to the One:

How am I to speak with you about the immeasurable, incomprehensible light? For Its aeon is indestructible, being tranquil and existing in silence, being at rest. It exists prior to the All, for It is the head of all the aeons and It gives them strength in Its goodness (5:1-4).

*S&H* bases its Science of being on the account of *Gen* 1, where time and space yield to infinitude, as expressed in this exegetical passage:

*Genesis i. 2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters* (italicised in *S&H*).

The divine Principle and idea constitute spiritual harmony, — heaven and eternity. ...Divine Science, the Word of God, saith to the darkness upon the face of error, “God is All-in-all,” and the light of ever-present Love illumines the universe. Hence the eternal wonder, — that infinite space is peopled with God’s ideas, reflecting Him in countless spiritual forms.<sup>134</sup>

*SRJ* and *S&H* convey their ‘celestial archetypes’ in contrasting ways, but they are both imitated by the people (or aeons, which represent ‘beings’) in the realm where God dwells.

Furthermore, the ‘traditional man’s’ deliberate repeating of acts that mirror the original awareness of creation also appears in varying forms in *SRJ* and *S&H*. “For traditional man,” Eliade explains, “the imitation of an archetypal model is a reactualization of the mythical moment when the archetype was

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<sup>133</sup> Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 5-6.

<sup>134</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 503.

revealed for the first time.”<sup>135</sup> In *SRJ*, the Saviour repeatedly corrects the evil acts of the counterfeit god by returning the victim to his or her origin. “It is she [the Saviour] who aids the whole creation by toiling with him [the human], guiding him by correction toward his fullness, and teaching him about the descent of the seed and teaching him about the path of the ascent, the path which it had come down” (18:24-27). Eddy also argues for the ‘reactualization’ (Eliade’s term) of God’s original creation:

Did the origin and the enlightenment of the race come from the deep sleep which fell upon Adam? Sleep is darkness, but God’s creative mandate was, “Let there be light.”.... Ontology receives less attention than physiology. Why? Because mortal mind must waken to spiritual life before it cares to solve the problem of being, hence the author’s experience; but when that awakening comes, existence will be on a new standpoint.<sup>136</sup>

For Eliade, the conflict between the ‘imitation of celestial archetype’ reality and the ‘modern’ or ‘history-oriented man’ highlights the reason that ‘archaic societies’ resisted so vigorously time-measured history.<sup>137</sup> Eliade notes that ‘modern man’ has not entirely abandoned his wish for the freedom from history’s terrorising grip,<sup>138</sup> but in general the modern paradigm requires that historic events become the reality that dominates humans. In other words, humans become victims of existential circumstances. *SRJ* and *S&H* both oppose the ‘terror of history’ by presenting an image of ontological reality with hope and regeneration. ‘Traditional man’ returns to it and imitates it repeatedly. Eddy finds no value in human history unless it guides toward the “the ethics of Truth,” or God’s order:

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<sup>135</sup> Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 76.

<sup>136</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 556.

<sup>137</sup> Eliade cites an example of the more comforting ‘traditional’ anti-historic attitude toward the ‘reality’ of history: “The barbarian invaders of the High Middle Ages were assimilated to the Biblical archetype Gog and Magog and thus received an ontological status and an eschatological function. A few centuries later, Christians were to regard Genghis Khan as a new David destined to accomplish the prophecies of Ezekiel. Thus interpreted, the sufferings and catastrophes provoked by the appearance of the barbarians on the medieval historical horizon were ‘tolerated’ by the same process that, some thousands of years earlier had made it possible to tolerate the terrors of history in the ancient East.” Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 142.

<sup>138</sup> Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 150.



Mere historic incidents and personal events are frivolous and of no moment, unless they illustrate the ethics of Truth. To this end, but only to this end, such narrations may be admissible and advisable; but if spiritual conclusions are separated from their premises, the *nexus* is lost, and the argument, with its rightful conclusions, becomes correspondingly obscure.<sup>139</sup>

Eliade claims that ‘modern man’ has not abandoned his grip on the belief in history that ultimately terrorises. In antiquity, the notion of the ‘immovable generation’ also has elements of an ontological reality free of history. For *SRJ*, the ‘immovable race’<sup>140</sup> dwells in the one and only realm, and for *S&H*, God’s offspring flourish in a timeless reflection, or ‘image and likeness’ of God.

### God’s Realm Beyond Agitation in *SRJ*

When the Saviour in *SRJ* prepared John to receive his instructions regarding God’s realm, he added that he was to repeat the instructions to his “fellow spirits who come from the immovable generation of the perfect Human” (3:18). The phrase ‘immovable generation’ is an essential element in the process of healing and salvation in antiquity. In *SRJ*, it exists in the ideal realm inhabited by the perfect creation and is established as the ‘root’ to which the saved human beings will return. In modern parlance, we might think of it as a kind of spiritual calm that is present among those who have come to understand the meaning of the kingdom of God now and forever.

While unknown to modern scholarship until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library in 1945, the phrase ‘immovable race’ was understood in the second century by a much wider audience than any specific religious community or sociological type.<sup>141</sup> Its desirability appeared in Jewish themes, where Yahweh

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<sup>139</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection* (Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, MA, USA, 1891), 21.

<sup>140</sup> Various known as ‘immovable generation’ and ‘generation that does not waver,’ this reference to immovability portrays those who have attained the greatest level of spiritual maturity.

<sup>141</sup> Michael A. Williams, *The Immovable Race: A Gnostic Designation and the Theme of Stability*

would not be *moved*. For instance, in *Psa* 21:7, the “king trusts in the Lord, and through the *steadfast* love of the Most High he *shall not be moved*.” The idea is also present in some form in the New Testament as well as among later thinkers. The author of *2 Thess* 2:2 urges his readers “not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed either by spirit or by word or by letter.” Plotinus, a third-century neo-Platonist, described it as an expression of “stability which accompanies conformity to the condition of the intelligible realm.”<sup>142</sup>

For the second-century author of *SRJ*, Sophia’s departure from the perfect stillness amidst all the aeons who surround the Father, Mind, devolved into violence and suffering for humankind. Williams’s research on the theme of immovability in antiquity provides a clue for modern minds to grasp the second-century link between salvation, healing, and overall well-being. “The central soteriological theme in *ApocryJn*<sup>143</sup> is the correction of Sophia’s deficiency,”<sup>144</sup> which he diagnoses as a reaction against her unwillingness “to *remain in her position*, glorifying.”<sup>145</sup> Sophia’s intense emotional outburst or passion as she realised her mistake was an agitated movement of a fallen soul and was made manifest in the counterfeit creation of the bodies of her son’s progeny. Her son Yaldabaoth, who made the humans in *his* own likeness, caused agitation, suffering, and sinfulness, and created their need for redemption, or a reappearing in the restful abode of the immovable race. According to the salvific message of *SRJ*, the spirit that ended (or healed) Sophia’s back-and-forth movement will be poured out for all humanity (14:24).

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in *Late Antiquity*, Nag Hammadi studies 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1985). 6-7.

<sup>142</sup> Williams, *Immovable Race*, 16.

<sup>143</sup> The abbreviation for *Apocryphon of John*, one of the other common English translations for the title of the text, referred to as *Secret Revelation of John* in this thesis.

<sup>144</sup> Williams, *Immovable Race*, 122.

<sup>145</sup> Williams, *Immovable Race*, 111.

The theme of shaking, or agitation, continued to appear in later texts as a representation of a state of separation from the God above. *Pistis Sophia* includes another representation of Sophia's penitential prayer: "my light has grown dim, since they have taken away from me my power, and all the powers within me *shake*."<sup>146</sup> Ignatius of Antioch also wrote, concerning the church in Smyrna, "I observed that you are established in an *unshakeable* faith, having been nailed, as it were, to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ in both body and spirit, and *firmly established* in love by the blood of Christ" (*Smyrn.* 1.1, emphases added). In the fourth century Athanasius recounted the monk Antony's battle with turmoil and agitation and praised his stability and victory over demons.

Demons will be discussed further in Chapter Five, but their importance in the struggle for 'immovability' lies in their role of creating disturbance. They disrupted the perfect stillness with emotional agitation and a multitude of 'movements' so that the believer's path to heaven would be blocked.<sup>147</sup> In the second century healing of soul and body were evidence of peace and victory over demonic agitation.

According to *SRJ*, those who have found freedom from the agitations of demons can return to their 'root' and live among the immovable generation. The Saviour thereby returns suffering humanity back to the original *immovable race* ("I am ... the one who raises you to the place of honor. Arise and remember that you are the one who has heard, and follow your root...." 26:27-29). Giversen's understanding of the immovable race, or 'generation which does not waver' (his translation), as used in the *SRJ*, supports my interpretation of the text as a theology of healing. He explains:

The generation which cannot be shaken, is thus the primeaval father's generation, the existing spirit's own generation; and the other spirits of this generation are brought forth as fruits of the primeval [sic] father. Thus, it

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<sup>146</sup> Williams, *Immovable Race*, 11.

<sup>147</sup> Williams, *Immovable Race*, 30.

is evident that the generation which is mentioned here, is to be understood as the immaterial and unalterable world, which consists of the primordial father, the first existing spirit, and all of the spirits which come from him later. John's kindred can be considered to be of that generation which cannot be shaken, because they have the same spirit (ἡ ἡμετέρα γενεά) as he, namely, the spirit which comes from the imperishable world.<sup>148</sup>

'John's kindred' refers to those whom John is instructed to teach at the beginning and end of the narrative.<sup>149</sup> The generation/race/people who "have the same spirit as he," which comes from the imperishable world, will become 'immovable.' They will be in the original state of harmony (stillness).

The second-century use of the term '*genos*' in the phrase usually translated as 'immovable race' needs to be clarified to correct a modern prejudice. The phrase/word could appear racially biased or exclusive to contemporary readers<sup>150</sup> and also distort the meaning of *SRJ*'s message of salvation. Since *genos* can be translated as either 'race,' 'generation,' or 'ethnic grouping,' it demarcates groups such as ancestors, rights of inheritance, knowledge, ways of life, and like ritual practices. Contrary to some arguments that the earliest Christianity was an inclusive movement, Buell has found evidence that their 'ethnic reasoning' (Buell's term) cannot be so easily dismissed; it was useful for self-definition on many levels.<sup>151</sup> For instance, they needed to show "how Christians conceptualized themselves not only as a group formed out of members of other peoples but also as

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<sup>148</sup> Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis*, 158-159.

<sup>149</sup> *SRJ* 27:14-15: "I (the Savior) have come to teach you ... so that you will understand the things which are not apparent [and those which are apparent, and to teach] you about the immovable generation of the perfect Human" (3:14-16). "And he (John) went to his fellow disciples. He related to them the things which the Savior had said to him" (27:15).

<sup>150</sup> Williams identifies five clichés that "have come to be almost routinely invoked at any mention of 'gnosticism.'" The fifth one, the notion of exclusiveness, is the object of Buell's correction. Williams explains, "We are set up to expect that gnostics will believe that an individual's nature and destiny are fixed at birth with salvation or destruction predetermined, and therefore we are not looking for those signals of provisionality that are actually present in text after text." Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 52-53.

<sup>151</sup> Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 1-2.

a people themselves.”<sup>152</sup> Their struggle to claim universality, even as they strove to identify their distinction from Jews, pagans, and even ‘false Christians,’ is not unlike the challenges of the modern ecumenical movement.

In the opening scene of *SRJ*, the Saviour encourages John with the promise of receiving all he needs. And in the closing scene, following John’s questions about salvation, the Saviour affirms, “I have told you (John) all things so that you might write them down and give them in secret to your fellow spirits. For this is the mystery of the immoveable generation” (27:3,4). The mystery – or the revelation – of the immovable generation is the means by which one can understand salvation. Arriving in the ‘immovable race,’ therefore, requires not a connection to the right people through blood or social relations, but a right response to the Spirit. Only those who are of the immovable race can understand how all souls “will be delivered into the pure light.” (23:1).

#### God’s Realm Beyond Time in *S&H*

Eliade’s concepts of societies who resisted ‘the terror of time’ include the imitation of a celestial archetype and the acquisition of meaning through deliberate repeating of acts originated by God. Because they resisted the material element of time, the ancients found ontological reality in God’s order and meaning in the experience of healing and salvation. People discovered their freedom from the tyranny of circumstances and realised their normal mental and physical wellness.

Eddy also resisted the ‘terror of time’ by attributing timelessness to God’s realm. It functions as a healing characteristic, because no time-defined events can change the original. Eddy finds the clearest authority for identifying the

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<sup>152</sup> Buell, *Why This New Race*, 15.

timelessness of God and God's realm in chapter one of *Genesis*, plus the first three verses of chapter two. Her exegesis of *Gen 1:26-27*<sup>153</sup> is based on the consistency of God's (Spirit's) creation of Humans<sup>154</sup> (‘*adam*’) in the image and likeness of boundless God, not the troubled *unlikeness* of God. Despite its logic, the premise of her claim was a bold and lonely move. Christian theologians have always struggled to reconcile God's ‘image and likeness’ of *Gen 1* with the sinful descendants of Adam. Most interpreters of the patristic, medieval, and modern era have asked, speculatively, how humans resemble God rather than animals.<sup>155</sup> Barth suggested an alternative relational reading of the text, resulting in an ‘image’ as a personal relationship, such as the reference to ‘male and female’ of *Gen 1:27* or an I-Thou ontology.<sup>156</sup> And more recently in the late twentieth century, an influential ‘royal functional interpretation’ has argued as God's representatives, humans are granted authorized power to share in God's rule.<sup>157</sup>

Eddy argued that the image of God does not need reconciliation with sinful humanity (although mortals do need to be reconciled to God), because God does not take on the time-terror of mortals. Others have approximated the continuity of God's image without compromising is likeness to God. For example, in the second century, Irenaeus explained that the image of God was real but not

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<sup>153</sup> *Gen 1:26-27*: Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>154</sup> I adopt King's system of capitalising Human. This system reflects the distinction Eddy makes between the ‘*adam*’ made in God's perfect image and likeness, and the fallen, mortal man – a ‘human.’ See footnote at Chapter Four, “Interpretation of SRJ Narrative.”

<sup>155</sup> Richard J. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: the Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2005), 18-19.

<sup>156</sup> Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 22-24.

<sup>157</sup> Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 27.

found within humans; instead, it was a *direction* toward which they are to grow.<sup>158</sup> In the thirteenth century, Aquinas maintained a generally accepted distinction between image and likeness, explaining that the *imago dei* exists in a person's intellect or reason.<sup>159</sup> Leigh (1603-1671), an early Protestant theologian, articulated the established theology inherited by Eddy's nineteenth-century New England. His doctrine of Divine simplicity – God's perfection and infinitude – included no qualities external to God. Eddy readily concurred with this concept some two centuries later, but she radically departed from his views of the Creator-creature relationship. Based on empirical evidence of man's finite nature in contrast with the divine, Leigh had argued:

In God they [the properties of being] are *Infinite*, Unchangeable and Perfect, even the Divine Essence itself; and therefore indeed all one and the same, but in men and Angels they are *finite*, changeable and imperfect, meer [sic] qualities, divers, they receiving them by participation only, not being such of themselves by nature (emphasis added).<sup>160</sup>

In a contemporary analysis of Leigh's theology, Dolezal agreed that the existence of these opposite characteristics of God and men had a practical side. The Creator-creation distinction – separating God's infinity from man's finite nature and God's perfection from man's imperfection – “humbles man, and puts the fear of God in his heart.”<sup>161</sup> But Eddy opposed the argument that God and God's creation are opposite each other. Whoever believes himself to be the precise opposite of God, his Creator, contradicts the logic of cause and effect, and immorally holds God's beloved creation unable to escape the doom of mortality.

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<sup>158</sup> Justo L. González, *A History of Christian Thought: From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*, rev. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 162.

<sup>159</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Part One, Question 85, First Article*, ed. Thomas S. Hibbs (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1999), 156.  
[http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/beliefs/imago\\_dei.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/beliefs/imago_dei.htm).

<sup>160</sup> Edward Leigh, *Systeme or Body of Divinity*, 1662, 161, as quoted in James E. Dolezal, "A practical scholasticism? Edward Leigh's theological method," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 71 no 2 (2009): 353.

<sup>161</sup> Leigh, *Systeme or Body of Divinity*, 353.

She staked out her position: “To begin rightly is to end rightly.”<sup>162</sup> Fully aware of the physical evidence of humanity’s shortcomings, she consistently defended the logic of the Human’s\* identity as the image and likeness of God over the fallibility of the human senses, for the sake of healing.

The continuity of God’s creation and control of it form the premise on which Eddy argues for the Saviour’s ability to restore – or reawaken one to – original perfection, even as human discords, including death, threaten. She does so by conceiving creation as a timeless revelation:

*Genesis i. 5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day (italicised in S&H).*

All questions as to the divine creation being both spiritual and material are answered in this passage, .... This also shows that there is no place where God’s light is not seen, since Truth, Life, and Love fill immensity and are ever-present. Was not this a revelation instead of a creation?<sup>163</sup>

Revelations do not originate in time; they make known what was always present but hidden. Although the opening of *Gen* 1:1 (“in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”) is usually conceived as a historical demarcation of events that took place after ‘the beginning,’ early Christian writers such as Origen (184-253) created precedent for understanding it in a timeless sense. Eddy thought of it as a revelation because God was making known in a dramatic way something that was previously unknown.

Shortly after *SRJ* began to circulate, Origen worked out his own doctrine of pre-existence and claimed the primordial creation of incorporeal rational minds to be as capable of the contemplation of God.<sup>164</sup> Such rational minds capable of the contemplation of God were somewhat commensurate with Eddy’s idea that

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<sup>162</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 262.

<sup>163</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 504.

<sup>164</sup> Peter W. Martens, "Origen's Doctrine of Pre-Existence and the Opening Chapters of Genesis," *ZAC* 16 (2013): 516.



the image and likeness of God should be *like* God. Although Origen's views of pre-existence were largely discredited in antiquity, Martens defends Origen's claim that his belief in the pre-existence of rational minds was the result of his search for the deeper allegorical meaning of the first chapters of *Genesis*.<sup>165</sup> Convinced that they could not possibly be narratives of historical record,<sup>166</sup> Origen theorised that the creation of incorporeal rational creatures was more reasonable.

Eddy never argued for predating incorporeal beings before historical beings, but Origen's explanation for dropping the chronological sense of *arche* (most often translated, 'beginning') does offer a rationale somewhat consistent with Eddy's own. Martens defends Origen's a-chronological sense of *arche* in *Gen* 1 by Origen's own use of the extended sense of its meaning 'source' of creation as well as 'beginning' of creation. By associating *arche* (*principium*) with the Word, Origen identifies Jesus as the personal agent through whom God made heaven and earth. Creation thus took on a christological meaning.<sup>167</sup> While Eddy made no correlation between the 'source of creation' and a christological purpose, she did make the association of *arche* with the source or *principium* in her exegetical statement on the first verse of *Genesis*:

*Genesis i. 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*  
(italicised in *S&H*).

The infinite has no beginning. This word *beginning* is employed to signify *the only*, — that is, the eternal verity and unity of God and man, including the universe. The creative Principle — Life, Truth, and Love — is God. The universe reflects God. There is but one creator and one creation. This creation consists of the unfolding of spiritual ideas and their identities, which are embraced in the infinite Mind and forever reflected.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Martens, "Origen's Doctrine," 523.

<sup>166</sup> Origen asks rhetorically, for example, "Now what intelligent person will believe that the first and the second and the third day, and the evening and the morning existed without the sun and moon and stars?" Origen, *De principis* 4.3.1 (730,323), quoted from Martens, "Origen's Doctrine," 522.

<sup>167</sup> Martens, "Origen's Doctrine," 524-5.

<sup>168</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 502.

Eddy's idea that "The infinite has no beginning" conforms to her view of the biblical book of *Revelation* where John saw a new heaven and new earth.<sup>169</sup> Properly experienced as a revelation, true creation, or the 'Science of creation,' as Eddy refers to it, coordinates with subsequent Bible revelation.<sup>170</sup>

Eliade acknowledges that pre-modern or 'traditional man' (also referred to as 'primitive man' in 'archaic societies') is imprisoned within the mythical horizon of archetypes and repetition, according to the critiques of 'modern man.'<sup>171</sup> He is creatively impotent and unable to accept the risks entailed by creative acts. But Eliade's hypothetic rebuttal from 'traditional man' argues that "Modern man can be creative only insofar as he is historical. That is, all creation is forbidden him except that which has its source in his own freedom; thus everything is denied him except the freedom to make history by making himself."<sup>172</sup> Eliade demonstrates how modern thinkers have had options according to the ontological reality – or the 'action-guiding worldview' – they chose. He concludes that "the man who has left the horizon of archetypes and repetition can no longer defend himself against that terror except through the idea of God."<sup>173</sup> Eddy's idea of God is a specific defence against disease, sin, and death, because as the image and likeness of God, the individual repeatedly reawakens to the original through prayer and practice.

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<sup>169</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 572.

<sup>170</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 537.

<sup>171</sup> Eliade qualifies 'modern man': "It is well to make clear that, in this context, 'modern man' is such in his insistence upon being exclusively historical; i.e., that he is, above all, the 'man' of historicism, of Marxism, and of existentialism. It is superfluous to add that not all of our contemporaries recognize themselves in such a man." Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* 156.

<sup>172</sup> Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, 156.

<sup>173</sup> Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, 162.

## Creation

The second major healing characteristic that comes under discussion in theme one is the creative power of God. The subject of God's realm precedes the topic of creation, because in both *SRJ* and *S&H* creation must be conceived in a timeless context. According to both authors an understanding of an all-harmonious, timeless creation provides a base line to which all deviations must return. And both authors defend their views of creation within the context of contemporary prevailing opinions. In the second century, *SRJ* challenged Plato's popular *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*, and Eddy defended the biblical account of creation in *Genesis* against Darwin's popular nineteenth-century theories of evolution.

### Cultural Context for Creation in *SRJ* and *S&H*

The earliest Christians drew boundaries between themselves and those with competing religious beliefs and practices, such as Romans, Jews, and Greek philosophers. But by the second century, overlapping ideas threatened those distinctions, and Christians were motivated to make a new life in Christ attractive to outsiders. Their discourse was arguably "the most intellectually experimental phase of early Christianity."<sup>174</sup> In order to understand the situation from a distance of nearly two millennia, it is helpful to remember that the Christian of the first two or three centuries of the Common Era would not have conceived some of the modern elements of Christian definition: a fixed canon, a hierarchical church structure, a pope, a cathedral, an agreed-upon creed, a doctrine of original sin, Father-Son-Holy Spirit Trinity, a consensus on resurrection, or a doctrine about the Christology of Jesus.

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<sup>174</sup> Nicola Denzey Lewis. *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism: Under Pitiless Skies*. eds. Johannes van Oort, Einar Thomassen, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies (Boston: Brill, 2014), 7.

An overwhelming amount of scholarship has focused on the degree of anachronistic heresy that might be exhibited in a given second-century text; however, it is more productive to analyse the impact of other cultures on early Christian thinking as it appears in early Christ-related texts. The divide emerging among Christians of the second century pertained more to attitudes toward Rome than to doctrinal issues.<sup>175</sup> Traditionalists maintained an anti-Rome position, as they presumed Jesus had done, and accused those who sought to assimilate Roman (and Greek) culture of polluting their Christian origins.<sup>176</sup>

‘Pro-assimilation’ is a more accurate appellation than ‘gnostic’ for those who sought to respond to the intellectually stimulating and relevant ideas of Roman scientists, lawyers and Greek philosophers. The acute problem of martyrdom is an example of the growing tension between the two Christian groups.<sup>177</sup> Traditionalists determined not to yield to pressure to comply with Roman customs, to the point of death; but pro-assimilation Christians found no conflict offering public allegiance to the Empire while sincerely maintaining their private devotions to Christ.<sup>178</sup> Pro-assimilation Christians sought to respond to the deep philosophical questions posed by second century philosophers from within the Christian paradigm.

Plato’s popular *Timaeus* expressed the dominant ideology of antiquity that inspired philosophical questions concerning creation from competing groups. The

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<sup>175</sup> Lewis, *Introduction to "Gnosticism,"* 45.

<sup>176</sup> The evolution of Christian relations with Judaism is another example of the way these relationships shaped their own identity. While Christians maintained Jewish scriptures as authoritative and sacred, they were also developing their own interpretation of Jewish scriptures during the writing of the Nag Hammadi documents so that they could distinguish their Christian identity. Many were wrestling with New Testament authors and with a wide variety of results. As a movement, Christians wrote a large body of materials, including letters to Christian communities, biographies of Jesus, sermons, apocryphal and interpretive texts. None of them, including those that resurfaced in Nag Hammadi, were intended to function as alternative sacred texts, so it is improper to categorise these particular texts as a type of heretical or alternative Bible. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen, *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'* (Boston: Brill, 2008), xii.

<sup>177</sup> The subject of martyrdom is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Five, “Healing as Alternative to Martyrdom.”

<sup>178</sup> Lewis, *Introduction to "Gnosticism,"* 45-46.

first few chapters in *Genesis* were the only sources available to Jews and Christians from which to enter the conversation, and the Mosaic cosmogony was too simplistic for an adequate reply to the *Timaeus*. Several Christians began to work out a more thorough response, but the struggle *between* Christians made Greeks into scapegoats for impure influences. The traditionalists' 'proto-orthodox' accusation that 'pro-assimilation' Christians had surrendered to 'pagan influence' is misleading, since almost all Christian communities were fluent in Greek thought. The notion of a monolithic and perfect form of Christianity, which many modern churches aspire to emulate, is now (in the twenty-first century) giving way to the realisation that multiple Christ groups contributed in greater and lesser ways to the ongoing development of Christianity.<sup>179</sup>

*SRJ* became one of the Christian writings that offered a full response to the serious cosmological and theological issues raised by the *Timaeus*,<sup>180</sup> but its own message regarding the care for world needs transcended Plato's philosophical purpose. This becomes evident in a comparison between their accounts of creation. The author of *SRJ* distinguishes his<sup>181</sup> own Christian view of God's attentiveness to the human predicament from Plato's idealism. King explains:

Instead of telling a story like Plato's *Timaeus* in which a clear and seamless line runs from pure, divine origination to the current arrangements of society, the *Secret Revelation of John* tells a story of breaks and ruptures, of the impossibility of establishing truth in a world cut off from the source of all truth, being, and goodness.<sup>182</sup>

Turner agrees, further elaborating on the distinction between the role of Plato's Demiurge\* and *SRJ*'s world creator (acting like, but never explicitly named a Demiurge), Yaldabaoth. Both *Timaeus* and *SRJ* claim the perfection of the divine

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<sup>179</sup> Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 136.

<sup>180</sup> Turner identifies *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes*, the *Three Steles of Seth*, and *Marsanes* as four other "Platonizing Sethian treatises." John D. Turner, "The Gnostic Sethians and Middle Platonism: Interpretations of the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*." *Vigiliae Christianae* 60, no. 1, (2006), 15.

<sup>181</sup> It is probable but not certain that the author of *SRJ* was male. I use the masculine pronoun with this caveat in mind.

<sup>182</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 162.

order, but Plato's Demiurge creates a "good and intelligent" universe, exempt from destruction. By contrast, Yaldabaoth is a jealous 'god' who assembles a *counterfeit* universe according to the likeness of an archetype he sees dimly. He is clearly a negative parody of Plato's Demiurge.<sup>183</sup>

These texts are so closely linked that their differences clarify the *SRJ*'s purpose, to make sense of a world "cut off from the source of all truth, being, and goodness" (King, quote above). *SRJ* demonstrates the existential realism of the world they were coping with, and the Christian response as a saving one. It (*SRJ*) is a bold rejection of the Platonic belief that living in harmony with the pattern of the visible universe would bring either social justice or personal salvation. *SRJ* exposes the fraudulent claims of the world rulers<sup>184</sup> in order to escape their domination and to experience the true salvation of Christ. "Ultimately it is not the body or the world that must be overcome, but the powers who imprison the soul within them.... [T]he first order of spiritual business is to unmask their deceptions."<sup>185</sup> Although the rhetorical reply to *SRJ*'s question of reality was inspired by mingling with Hellenistic culture, the Christian response to the need for healing and rescue from the evil of the world was part of the distinctive Christian message.

Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* captured public imagination in a similar fashion in the nineteenth century. Skepticism toward the existence of an omnipotent and loving God grew out of the naturalist's arguments in favour of evolution. In particular, liberal Christians challenged the doctrine of predestination earlier in the century, and agnostics derided the notion of omnipotence.

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<sup>183</sup> Turner, "Gnostic Sethians," 16-17.

<sup>184</sup> King argues that the rulers and Chief Ruler usually portrayed as demons in *SRJ* refer to the Roman rulers who are ignorant and malevolent beings and "who declare themselves the authors and enforcers of universal justice and peace." King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 3. This topic is discussed in further detail in Chapter Five, "Evil and Second-Century Society."

<sup>185</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 163.

Furthermore, “after Darwin the relation between God, man, and nature could never again be as clear as once it had been.”<sup>186</sup> When Darwin married his wife, Emma, he was a faithful Christian, but his “disbelief crept over [him] at a very slow rate.”<sup>187</sup> In private correspondence with her, he expressed the anguish of many faithful Christians over the inevitable clash between the orthodox teaching of the *Book of Genesis* and the mounting evidence of evolution: “When I am dead, know that many times, I have kissed and cried [sic] over this. C.D.”<sup>188</sup> This turmoil represents the state of biblical faith in Eddy’s day.

The 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species* had rocked the intellectual, religious, scientific, political, and social world of the nineteenth century. And within a couple of decades, across the ocean in New England, Eddy weighed in on the evolutionary controversy and the contemporary textual criticism concerns with ideas that conformed to neither liberal nor conservative Christian views, but remained firmly in the Christian camp. Her ideas of creation were crucial to her understanding of God’s healing power. While some liberal Christians maintained that evolution was superior to the *Genesis* account and tried to reconcile a modified form of Christianity, conservative Protestants denied the possibility of any reconciliation.<sup>189</sup> But Eddy offered a third option by taking the meaning of ‘science’ itself to task. The new textual studies had the effect of strengthening rather than eroding her conviction in the superiority of *Genesis* to evolution.

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<sup>186</sup> Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* was published in 1859. The quote from Frederick Gregory is in Robert David Thomas, *“With Bleeding Footsteps”: Mary Baker Eddy’s Path to Religious Leadership* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 124.

<sup>187</sup> Frank Burch Brown, *The Evolution of Darwin’s Religious Views* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press), 21, as quoted from Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882*, ed. Nora Barlow (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958), 95.

<sup>188</sup> Brown, *Darwin’s Religious Views*, 35, as quoted in “Mrs. Darwin’s Papers on Religion,” from Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, 235-238.

<sup>189</sup> Patrick Allitt, ed., *Major Problems in American Religious History: Documents and Essays*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 258.

For Eddy, the meaning of science was her underlying question, even though it was expressed in religious terms. She approved Darwin's scientific consistency, but not his premise:

May not Darwin be right in thinking that apehood preceded mortal manhood?<sup>190</sup>

In its history of mortality, Darwin's theory of evolution from a material basis is more consistent than most theories. Briefly, this is Darwin's theory, — that Mind produces its opposite, matter, and endues matter with power to recreate the universe, including man. Material evolution implies that the great First Cause must become material, and afterwards must either return to Mind or go down into dust and nothingness.<sup>191</sup>

Her philosophical premise was that God, also called 'Mind' or 'First Cause' does not produce the opposite of God. She reasoned:

Either Mind produces, or it is produced. If Mind is first, it cannot produce its opposite in quality and quantity, called matter. If matter is first, it cannot produce Mind. Like produces like. In natural history, the bird is not the product of a beast. In spiritual history, matter is not the progenitor of Mind.<sup>192</sup>

Furthermore, she argued:

Did man, whom God created with a word, originate in an egg? When Spirit made all, did it leave aught for matter to create?<sup>193</sup>

The true theory of the universe, including man, is not in material history but in spiritual development.<sup>194</sup>

Eddy did not dispute the notion of development or evolution. Science, for her, was a means of knowledge through logical cause and effect relationships. Her point of entry was with God as cause or Creator, and she allowed the logical consequence to inform her understanding of origins.

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<sup>190</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 543.

<sup>191</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 547.

<sup>192</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 551.

<sup>193</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 543.

<sup>194</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 547.



Mind, the Creator for *SRJ* and *S&H*

The blurring of characters, time periods, cause and effect can be confusing for the modern reader of *SRJ*, but its author shows no interest in an anachronistic post-Enlightenment type of rationalism. The logical foundation for the cosmogonies of both authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* is that the intelligent Being, God is the origin of all being. They both argue there is one ultimate cause and control over the universe. In *SRJ*, the perfect Human appeared as the ‘primal revelation’:

And from the first Understanding and the perfect Mind, through God, through the approval of the great invisible Spirit and the approval of Autogenes, It named the true perfect Human, man, the primal *revelation*, Adam (emphasis added) (9:2).

‘Gazing’/‘staring’ was the means by which this perfect Human, was created – or revealed (6:2-15), so “Its [the Father’s] thinking became a thing” (5:13). Lewis explains this ancient concept for modern thinkers:

Imagine the original force in the cosmos as a big giant brain. In the *ApJn*<sup>195</sup>, as in other texts from Nag Hammadi, the Great Invisible Spirit is like a limitless, eternal, incorporeal mind. This mind does what minds do: it thinks. Here, it *thinks* out the cosmos: all higher creation comes from the act of thinking...<sup>196</sup>

The relationship between thinker and thought thus expresses the source of the Creator’s power over its creation. When this authority is threatened, the Creator’s messenger, the Saviour, restores this original relationship with all the authority of the Creator-Mind.

In *SRJ*, detailed descriptions of both the process and result of the creative act serve as a necessary pathway back to the original perfect creation, which is the basis of salvation (to be discussed more fully in Chapter Six). The first self-aware thought of the ineffable Being is the first and perfect power known as Barbelo (also ‘Mother’) (5:15,19), who in turn asks the Virginal Spirit for Foreknowledge, Truth, Incorruptibility, and Everlasting Life. In response, the Spirit ‘stares’ or

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<sup>195</sup> *ApJohn* is an abbreviation for ‘*Apocryphon of John*,’ another name for the *Secret Revelation of John*.

<sup>196</sup> Lewis, *Introduction to "Gnosticism,"* 156.

‘gazes,’ and these intangible ideas appear as beings in the Creator’s realm (6:1-2). This ‘perfect Mind’ (9:2), which brought humanity into being from the power and authority of the Spirit of God, is the emanation, action, and evidence of the supreme Deity. As will become evident through the action of the Saviour acting on behalf of the transcendent Being later in the narrative, the relationship between the invisible Spirit and humanity is retained as a thought-governing authority. Since the Saviour must confront every form of opposition to the power of the Father, each detail established in the original creation serves as a defence weapon. There is good reason, then, for the authority of the realm to be established through a thinker-thought relationship, as the enemy will attempt to use mental trickery to oppose the divine dominance.

Tellingly, the noetic battle for control takes place in the human body. “From intercourse he [the Chief Ruler/Yaldbaoth] caused birth in the likeness of *bodies* and he supplied them from his counterfeit spirit” (22:24). The body is the site of revelation, and yet the struggle is experienced in an existential manner. Victory for the divine realm in this battlefield could be likened to ‘healing,’ since the body no longer suffers the effects of the hostilities, when the Spirit comes to the rescue.

And the seed [children of Seth] existed like this<sup>197</sup> for a while: providing assistance, so that when the Spirit descends from the holy aeons, it will correct (the seed) and *heal it* from the deficiency so that the entire Fullness might become holy and without deficiency (22:34-37).

The threatening evil force, according to *SRJ*, is ontologically a mockery of the divine goodness, a supposed antithesis of it. It claims the power of the divine by seeking to wrest its authority to control humanity, and does so through the fraudulent action of designing its own creation.

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<sup>197</sup> “Like this” refers to the condition in which the children of Seth (or, the children derived from the true Creator/Mind) had been “made to drink water of forgetfulness by the Chief Ruler so that they would not know themselves (and would not know) where they had come from” (22:32-33).

Eddy argues for Mind/God as the creator in *S&H* as well. “Infinite Mind is the creator, and creation is the infinite image or idea emanating from this Mind,” she writes.<sup>198</sup> God is not both infinite and finite; and God’s likeness is not unlike God. Her chapter, ‘Creation,’ in *S&H* is a full eleven-page defence of the consistency of God’s uncompromised infinitude in the role of Creator. To summarise, the infinitude of God eliminates the possibility of something *else*. There could be no other creator, and there could be no effect from another cause, if God is creator and cause. If the syllogism is correct, there is no other existence outside of the “eternal verity and unity of God and man, including the universe.” Thus the *only* creation appears in the infinite existence of God.

The apparent contradiction to God’s infinite being and its likeness as infinite creation lies in the distortion of the physical senses of humans, not the logic or the truth of God’s infinite nature. Addressing the reluctant reader, Eddy argues:

Deducing one’s conclusions as to man from imperfection instead of perfection, one can no more arrive at the true conception or understanding of man, and make himself like it, than the sculptor can perfect his outlines from an imperfect model, or the painter can depict the form and face of Jesus, while holding in thought the character of Judas.<sup>199</sup>

Darwin posited that after God’s initial creation, there was no supplementary intervention from the divine source. The universe, therefore, was created with the ability to evolve, but with no teleological purpose to guide it.<sup>200</sup> An even more ‘naturalistic evolution model’ would argue that God had nothing at all to do with an initial creation. Despite these differences in the role of the supernatural in the origin of the universe, contemporary biologist Rau shows how both Darwin and

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<sup>198</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health* 256.

<sup>199</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 259-260.

<sup>200</sup> Gerald Rau, *Mapping the Originals Debate: Six Models of the Beginning of Everything* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press Academic, 2012), 44.

the naturalist evolution model agree on the laws of nature, and yet “science as we know it, breaks down at the moment of the origin of the universe.”<sup>201</sup>

Eddy, disagreeing with the premise that everything can be explained by natural (material) causes, argued that science based on any ‘natural’ (meaning physical) phenomena *would* break down, because Mind/the First Cause never originated that which is so unlike Itself. In light of Darwin’s loss of faith over a missing guiding force in the universe, Eddy called for an even more theistic position to solve his dilemma. Naturalists also depended (and still depend) on empirical evidence for determining the age of the earth, which, as Rau notes, has never been successfully proven. But Eddy disputed all evidence derived from physical senses, regardless of its conclusions, because Mind/God never became dependent on the human brain to conceive or create.

By opposing Darwin’s refusal to acknowledge supplementary intervention, Eddy emphasised her position that Mind is able to ‘heal’ or bring back to the original ‘reality’ of God’s good purpose. Healing, in this sense, is understood and accomplished in a way that resonates with the Creator/Mind of *SRJ*.

Delusion, sin, disease, and death arise from the false testimony of material sense, which, from a supposed standpoint outside the focal distance of infinite Spirit, presents an inverted image of Mind and substance with everything turned upside down.<sup>202</sup>

Ontological reality for *SRJ* and *S&H* appears in the upright likeness of God/Mind, the creator, even when the supposed opposite presents itself to human sense. From the Christian perspective, a Saviour is needed to dissolve the false testimony.

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<sup>201</sup> Rau, *Mapping the Originals Debate*, 44.

<sup>202</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 301.

## Omnipotence

God's omnipotence, the third of God's healing characteristics, discussed in theme one, is simpler to describe than to fathom. Eddy plainly claims the omnipotence of God, and the author of *SRJ* uses a similar term, identifying God as all-powerful. Such a notion is aggravating to contemporary thinkers, because it appears to ignore the existential reality of human suffering, and it appears to advocate a patriarchal lordship that feminism has rejected. But God's omnipotence is essential to the theology of healing in both *SRJ* and *S&H*. 'False' or deluded testimony from human sense argues against the supremacy of God in both texts, but both authors defend God's power directly and indirectly through a connection with God's origin.

*SRJ* speaks in first and third person voices:

I am the one who dwells with you (pl.) always. I am the Father. I am the Mother. I am the Son (3:11). ... The Monad<sup>203</sup> is a *monarchy without anything existing over it*. It exists as the God and Father of the All, the invisible which dwells above the All, imperishableness which exists as the pure light upon which it is not possible for any eye to gaze (emphasis added) (4:2-4).

The 'nothing else-ness' of God is often expressed in apophatic terms, such as "without anything over it," "the *invisible*," "*imperishableness*," and "*not possible*." Elsewhere the 'omni-' relation to all existential being is expressed by its incomparability to anything else:

"It is more than divine, without anything existing over It. For nothing lords over It" (4:6); "It is not something among existing things, but It is far superior (to others as though It is comparable to them) but as that which belongs to Itself" (4:29).

The character 'Barbelo' in *SRJ*, closely associated with power, plays a number of dual roles. She represents both subject and object of power, both cause and effect, and both female counterpart of the Invisible Spirit and the object of the

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<sup>203</sup> The Berlin Codex (shorter) version of this verse is: "The Unity is a monarchy with nothing ruling over it."

Invisible Spirit's creation.<sup>204</sup> For example, she herself 'asks' for foreknowledge, incorruptibility, Life, and Truth, and she receives them. And for this she becomes the 'perfect power.' Power in this sense seems associated with both the effect of what Invisible Spirit does, as well as her power to cause. When the Father 'looks into Barbelo' she conceives light, or good.

...She is *the power which is before the All*. ....she who is the *perfect power*, Barbelo, the perfect aeon of the glory. (5:15,20)<sup>205</sup>

She [Protennoia/Barbelo] *became a womb* for the All because she is prior to them all, the Mother-Father, the first Human,<sup>206</sup> the holy Spirit, the triple male, *the triple power*, the triple named androgyne.... (5:24-26).

'Becoming a womb' implies the mothering birth or cause of other beings, and reference to the 'triple power' is the closest language in this text resembling our modern sense of 'omnipotence.' "In the language of the Secret Book of John," Davies explains, "the word *thrice* (his translation of 'triple') forms superlatives."<sup>207</sup> Therefore, the 'triple power' would signify the '*most* powerful.'

As strange as it may seem to modern logic, Barbelo conveys the sense of 'most powerful' – or all-powerful – by both receiving and giving all power. But that dual action does not seem to lessen the sense of *omni*-potence, because, as Davies notes:

The One has become Two. This is a psychological process, not a process of material creation. The Father has perceived his own image within his own light and that act of perception – that awareness of himself – has come into being as a provisionally separate entity.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Davies helpfully explains: "As the Secret Book of John moves along, it becomes increasingly mythological, turning from conceiving the universe as the structure of the mind of the One toward describing the universe as a cosmic drama wherein supernatural actors play humanlike roles. The introduction of the name Barbelo stands at the beginning of that process." Davies, *The Secret Book of John*, 24.

<sup>205</sup> This is the Berlin Codex (shorter version) translation. Codex II (longer version reads): "...She is the first power which is before them all.... the first power, the glory of Barbelo, the glory which is perfect in the aeons." It is not clear whether the possibly redacted (longer) version implies that Barbelo is the *first among others*, or that the 'first' is a superlative expression.

<sup>206</sup> King translates PΩΜΔ (often translated as *man* or *human*) as *Human* with a capital 'H,' because it indicates an identity above the ordinary human concept, and it is also not a reference to a male person.

<sup>207</sup> Davies, *The Secret Book of John*, 26.

<sup>208</sup> Davies, *The Secret Book of John*, 22.

Omnipotence is also conceived in relation to evil. According to three proposals known to us from antiquity, the defence of God's omnipotence hinges on their understanding of evil. One, representing the well-known teacher Valentinus, is based on the theory that "God's creation not only resulted in a well-ordered cosmos, but his work with *hyle* (matter, material substance) also led, though indirectly, to the emergence of evil, which now becomes visible in the wrongdoings of humans."<sup>209</sup> Two, a rebuttal represented by Hermogenes (in Methodius's *On Free Will*) and third-century Tertullian, is "that the only source of the evil, which humans do to each other, is free will, which God bestowed upon them."<sup>210</sup> Three, Valentinus's later followers replied with a modification of their teacher's theory, offering yet another option to solve the Valentinian problem that brought "the good God suspiciously close to *hyle* and the evil inherent in it" – thus implying God's weakness. Preserving the supremacy of God, they argued for the existence of two gods, in order to distance the truly good God from *hyle*.<sup>211</sup> However, as Dunderberg observes, none of the proposals was fully satisfactory. For example, a number of prominent Christians accepted the idea of preexistent *hyle*, but it implied an unacceptable theory of an eternal principle other than God. God's gift of free will also makes God responsible for the source of evil. And the later Valentinian solution with two gods still implied that the superior God was unable to prevent evil.<sup>212</sup> God did not appear to be omnipotent.

The *SRJ* emphasis on a *counterfeit spirit* provides a solution independent of the Valentinian debate. *SRJ* does agree with the Valentinian view that another

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<sup>209</sup> Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 74.

<sup>210</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 73-4.

<sup>211</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 74.

<sup>212</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 73-74.

inferior god was responsible for both the psyche and material elements of humanity. This prevents God from *enabling* evil through the human use of free will. But *hyle*, or the source of humanity's limitations and emotions, neither coexisted with nor was created by the all-good, omnipotent Spirit. Evil is the fault of the lesser god, who attempted the creation of human beings in the image of the perfect Adam, but who is identified as *the counterfeit* or *false spirit* numerous times throughout the text.<sup>213</sup>

This *SRJ* God, therefore, acknowledges no other being, existence, or power beyond its own. As the “monarchy without anything ruling over it,” this God functions as if any supposed counterfeit power is defeated through God's supreme healing and saving power. Without absolute supremacy, the authority for healing in *SRJ* would be undermined, because the human body suffers or enjoys the defeat or victory of its ‘commander’ (the Invisible Spirit or counterfeit spirit). In both the longer and shorter versions of *SRJ*, the God who sent the Saviour is the clear winner. In the shorter version, the Saviour concludes his teaching to John with, “These are also the things which she [the Mother] did in the world. She set her seed upright”(27:7-8). More decisively in the longer version, the Saviour (called the perfect Pronoia at this point in the text) “raised him up [the person suffering the effects of the counterfeit spirit's cruelty] with the light of the water with five seals so that death would not have power over him from this day on” (26:32-33). The ‘five seals’ are an indication of a baptismal rite, which, as King explains, “brings the power of the spirit into the soul to strengthen it in its battle against the passions and the power of the counterfeit spirit.”<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Sometimes all versions use the same term ‘counterfeit spirit’ but at other times one of the versions uses another negative term in its place. For example, ‘adversarial spirit’ is used in the Berlin Codex, where ‘counterfeit spirit’ is used in Codex II (19:11). Or, when the Berlin Codex speaks of the ‘counterfeit spirit causing them to stumble,’ the copyist of Codex II writes of the ‘despicable spirit leading them astray’ (23:26).

<sup>214</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 149.



Eddy equates omnipotence directly with God in *S&H* through God's oneness and allness, because allness precludes any *other* power or being. She explains:

Principle and its idea is one, and this one is God, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Being, and His reflection is man and the universe. *Omni* is adopted from the Latin adjective signifying *all*. Hence God combines all-power or potency, all-science or true knowledge, all-presence.<sup>215</sup>

Her defence of omnipotence stems from her commitment to Christian healing.

While her primary calling was to bind up the broken-hearted, heal the sick, and transform the sinner, she was conscious that in doing so she was, in effect, throwing down the gauntlet to the human material senses. Gottschalk explains:

Christians, [Eddy] maintained, without ever quite realizing it, held to the belief in the effective supremacy of matter over Spirit in daily life. If they not only held to but defended this belief, they could not, in her view, escape the iron logic of seeing God as the ultimate source of suffering and death. For Eddy, as for countless others, this problem of what is technically termed 'theodicy' was not a problem of logic but a problem of life.<sup>216</sup>

Theodicy as understood in post-Holocaust years intensified the problem of evil at a level unheard of in the nineteenth century, as will be discussed more fully in Chapter Eight. But Eddy's theodicy was part of her rebellion against the wrathful God of her Calvinist upbringing, and the general Christian compliance with God's inability to help sufferers. Defending the unwavering Augustinian and Puritan claim of God's sovereign power and infinite goodness, Eddy classified the cause for suffering in any form as an arrogant affront to God. "Would anyone call it wise and good to create the primitive, and then punish its derivative,"<sup>217</sup> she asked?

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<sup>215</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 465-6.

<sup>216</sup> Stephen Gottschalk. *Rolling Away the Stone: Mary Baker Eddy's Challenge to Materialism*, Religion in North America, eds. Catherine L. Albanese and Stephen J. Stein (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>217</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 356.

The notion of omnipotence is often read as a cold, uncaring attitude toward those who suffer,<sup>218</sup> but one must remember that Eddy's theological system evolved during her own darkest period. Having experienced decades of loss and suffering, she was determined to find a loving God who had the power to overthrow the sting and sorrow of evil, for herself and others. Only the omnipotent goodness of God would have both the will and authority to overcome the source of human suffering. As usual, the basis of her argument in favour of God's power is the logic of God's goodness:

If sin, sickness, and death are as real as Life, Truth, and Love, then they must all be from the same source; God must be their author. Now Jesus came to destroy sin, sickness, and death; yet the Scriptures aver, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Is it possible, then, to believe that the evils which Jesus lived to destroy are real or the offspring of the divine will?<sup>219</sup>

God's omnipotence must be understood for the purpose of experiencing the meaning of Christ's victory for all humanity.

It is difficult to imagine more different worlds than *SRJ*'s and *S&H*'s from which these ideas were produced, but both authors claimed the supremacy of God in response to the urgent needs of human experience. *SRJ*'s repeated insistence on the indomitability of the spiritual self in the face of all malice and oppression exemplifies its approach to the struggles of second-century Christian life. King identifies the purpose of God's supremacy in the world of *SRJ*:

By denying the validity of identities given by the world – such as master and slave, rich and poor, citizen and subject – it imagined a renegotiation of the political order. By refusing to acknowledge that those who rule the world are really in charge, it reframed and undermined oppressors' claims to legitimate rule.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> This is a common but misguided accusation against Eddy, most frequently heard from liberation theologies that advocate standing in solidarity with the oppressed.

<sup>219</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 474.

<sup>220</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 172.

It refuses to give power to oppression, slave-master relations, poverty, or any other oppressive ruler, and it returns to the spiritual origin.

In the nineteenth century human suffering abounded, but from different causes. Like the author of *SRJ*, Eddy refused to acknowledge any real presence or power apart from God. War broke out half way through Eddy's life, devastating families and faithful believers, but she argued for the supremacy of God's goodness as a more logical and trustworthy state of being than the 'vigorous claims of evil:'

If thought is startled at the strong claim of Science for the supremacy of God, or Truth, and doubts the supremacy of good, ought we not, contrariwise, to be astounded at the vigorous claims of evil and doubt them, and no longer think it natural to love sin and unnatural to forsake it, — no longer imagine evil to be ever-present and good absent?<sup>221</sup>

Eddy persistently urged her students to be more skeptical of the power of evil than the power of God, and the author of *SRJ* imagined the power of God outsmarting and overpowering every destructive deed of the false rulers.

## Dualism

Theme one, which identifies the healing characteristics of God in *SRJ* and *S&H*, highlights God's omnipresence, omnipotence, and goodness. Any lesser power would yield to something greater and be unable to dominate it. But opponents of such a theological position have long argued that this divine realm contrasts with the world, separating *pneumatic* ('spirit') reality from *hylic* ('matter')<sup>222</sup> reality, both of which are present in the human condition. Williams counters that the dualist distinction is misplaced. Rather than defining contrasting *experiences* of cosmic evil, some of these texts (such as *SRJ* specifically) might be

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<sup>221</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 130.

<sup>222</sup> The meaning of *hylic* and its theological problem is discussed in Chapter Five, "The problem with matter."

presenting different strategies for *explaining* evil.<sup>223</sup> I defend Williams's position on the basis of *SRJ*'s intentional divergence from Plato's dualism. Furthermore, Eddy's parallel opposition to Descartes's dualism argues on the same basis, namely that Descartes' separation of mind and body misdiagnoses the problem of evil. Dualism in both Plato and Descartes emphasises experience over explanation, whereas the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* explain evil as a contradiction to God's plan to be overcome.

### *SRJ* and *S&H* versus Dualism

Opponents to dualism, including the early church Fathers, usually lump together *SRJ* and the other Nag Hammadi texts under the disparaging rubric of Gnostic dualism. Indeed, the texts can appear to support the allegation because in some cases such as *SRJ* the Invisible Spirit God, identified as utterly transcendent, eternal, immutable, and perfect, contrasts starkly with its lower world of darkness, created in ignorance and evil intent. However, King argues that the numerous Nag Hammadi works present a variety of perspectives on the relations between God and the world. The general allegation of Nag Hammadi's dualism distorts the message of *SRJ* and other Nag Hammadi texts and should not be permitted to define it. Today's scholars, like King, can study the individual texts, look beyond the general label of dualism, and determine what each individual text communicates about God and the world.<sup>224</sup>

In her discussion of *SRJ* specifically, she points out that its author does *not* "regard the body or the world as evil *per se*, but only as the battleground on which

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<sup>223</sup>Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 100.

<sup>224</sup> King refers to Hans Jonas's typological (phenomenological) model, which defines dualism in sweeping terms and refers to 'Gnosticism' as a whole rather than as numerous and distinct Christian groups. While applauding his separation of typological-structural models from chronological-genealogical historiography, she disagrees with his identifying Gnosticism as a unitary whole, even in a typological category. Jonas's essentialising in this manner incorrectly allowed "the principle of Gnostic dualism [to be] thus reduced to regarding the material world as evil." King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 123.

the struggle between good and evil is waged.”<sup>225</sup> More importantly, however, using any misleading premise to disregard the text obfuscates the main message of the text as a whole. Arguing that all non proto-orthodox texts teach God’s disdain for the world distorts the meaning of the longer version of *SRJ* especially, which emphasises the role of the demons who control the body. The detailed discussion of demons is not meant to prove the body’s evil nature (a dualist argument), but to provide the specific means for *healing* the body.

I suggest that the accusation of dualism leveled at these texts persists today because of the past influence of Plato (428 BCE – 348 BCE) and the current influence of Descartes (1596-1650). Plato’s dualism envisioned a divine realm thoroughly free of the evils of the material world. The two unchangeable patterns of nature consisted of divine happiness and godless misery. Since, according to Plato, death was nothing more than the release of the soul from the prison of the body, one was advised to care for the eternal well-being of the soul and to disregard the pleasures of the body.<sup>226</sup>

However, by the first century Stoicism had overtaken Platonism in public thought at least to a degree, and the Platonist view of the body was modified. Rather than dismissing the body, Stoics strove to control it; consequently the physiology of the body became fused with the more ethereal aspects of being. *Pneuma*, (‘wind,’ ‘spirit’) for instance, was understood as a rarified form of air and became the source of perception carried on through the veins and arteries.<sup>227</sup> And by the second century, the notion of the fluidity between the earthly parts and the rarified parts of being was common. An individual body was part of the hierarchically designed cosmos.

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<sup>225</sup> King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 200.

<sup>226</sup> Karen King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Santa Rose, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 41.

<sup>227</sup> Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 12-13.

*SRJ* offered a distinct Christian voice in this cultural milieu. In contrast to the dualistic demiurge\* of Plato's *Timaeus*, the author of *SRJ* shows that its God is not aloof in his heavenly realm, but deeply involved in the injustice and suffering in the world.<sup>228</sup> Two distinct records of creation are documented in *SRJ*, but they do not relate to each other in a Platonic sense. One (5:6 – 9:14) showcases the perfection and goodness of God and the entire universe, and the other, which began with Yaldabaoth's creating of his own ruling authorities (11:5), explicates the cause of all human sin, sickness and death. But what is frequently overlooked is the fact that the second account is consistently treated as a *counterfeit*, or false version of the original reality of the Father-Mother-Son realm. The *SRJ* Saviour spells it out:

For my part, I will teach you about the mystery of their life. It is their *counterfeit* spirit which dwells in them, whose purpose is to make him wander so that he does not know his perfection (emphasis added) (20:7-9).

A counterfeit is not in the same ontological category of reality as the original, and its purpose is to deceive. Therefore, *SRJ* never claims a dualistic separation between God and God's offspring, but demonstrates the misery associated with *believing* in that separation. The good news of the secret revelation is that God has sent a Saviour to awaken and rescue everyone who has been taken in by the seductive measures of the false god:

So through his beneficent Spirit and his great mercy, he sent a helper to Adam. It is she who aids the whole creation ...by teaching him about the descent of the seed and teaching him about the path of ascent, the path which it had come down.... (18:22, 24, 27).

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<sup>228</sup> In the *Timaeus* (48-49), Plato's demiurgic God is successful with his own world of beauty and justice, but the problem of evil is left unresolved. So Plato proposes a dual universe produced by a combination of mind and necessity ("fate"). But this 'form of the errant cause,' as necessity was often called, required a third principle of Being. This third being is "the receptacle" – or "the nurse of all becoming and change." She has no form and can take on only as she receives. The parallel 'nurse' in *SRJ* – the representative of the transcendent Being – says, "I who am the light that exists in the light and the remembrance of the Pronoia, I traveled in order to enter into the midst of the darkness and the inside of Hades. I filled my countenance with the light of the consummation of their aeon. And I entered the midst of their prison, which is the prison of the body. And I said, 'Whoever hears, arise from lethargic sleep!' (26:18-22)

King observes how themes of secrecy and mystery are “necessary to establish any possibility to the audacious claim that its description of a second world – of the true God, the aeons above, the deeds of saviors and the actions of the lower gods – is a veritable reality.”<sup>229</sup> Neither secrecy nor counterfeit produce an alternate ontological reality. They are the means by which one can *understand* their situation differently.

A similar situation applies to the accusations of dualism in *S&H*. The prevailing worldview promulgated by Descartes in the seventeenth century created an ontological dichotomy between mind and body, matter and non-matter. Even Plato, the most dualistic of the ancient philosophers, organised such opposing characteristics along a spectrum rather than strictly separating the realms as Descartes did.<sup>230</sup> For Descartes the soul or ‘I’ is not corporeal and cannot participate in the physical, material, or natural realm. By defining the category of nature as only those things that could be observed ‘scientifically,’ he left everything outside that description in need of a category. Thus the ‘supernatural’ is quite real to Descartes, even though it cannot be analysed by rational means. Martin stresses the effects of Descartes on modern readers of ancient writers, and I argue that the same must be true for their reading of nineteenth-century *S&H* as well. After Descartes the prevailing worldview shifted to an increasingly sharp boundary between the material and non-material, body and soul, natural and ‘supernatural.’<sup>231</sup>

Reading Eddy through the lens of Descartes could imply Cartesian dualism. For instance, she writes, “There is but one spiritual existence, — the Life

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<sup>229</sup> Karen L. King, “Mystery and Secrecy in *The Secret Revelation of John*.” Pages 61-85 in *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices; Studies for Einar Thomassen at Sixty*. eds. Christian H. Bull, Liv Ingeborg Lied, John H Turner. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies. eds., Johannes van Oort, Einar Thomassen (Boston: Brill, 2012), 76:74.

<sup>230</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 9.

<sup>231</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 4.

of which corporeal sense can take no cognizance.”<sup>232</sup> But this idea, often taken out of context in order to argue dualism in Eddy, is not complete. She explains further that her sense of spiritual existence contrasts with dualism because it allows for no other cause, substance, or reality:

Therefore there can be no effect from any other cause, and there can be no reality in aught which does not proceed from this great and only cause. Sin, sickness, disease, and death belong not to the Science of being. They are the errors, which presuppose the absence of Truth, Life, or Love.<sup>233</sup>

She is not naïve about the experience of ‘sin, sickness, disease, and death,’ but she privileges the logic of one supreme cause above the evidence of the senses. Her claim provides further evidence of Williams’s argument that these texts offer explanations rather than defining experiences. Based on the logic of the infinity of Spirit, there is no *other* counter-existence. The evidence of such an opposite, Eddy argues, could only appear from a suppositional impossibility. A finite sense of the infinite is an oxymoron.

### Body in *SRJ* and *S&H*: Healing versus Dualism

In the ancient world, the human body was not a distinguishable entity separate from one’s being. It was a small version of the universe at large – not *like* a microcosm; it *was* a microcosm.<sup>234</sup> The body was understood to consist of the same elements as the entire cosmos: air (*pneuma*), earth, water, and fire. It was governed in a hierarchical mode in the same way society and the universe are governed. That is, as the political hierarchy of the city mirrors the harmonious hierarchy of universe, so the hierarchy of the body mirrors the same structure. The head governs the body, and stronger body parts expel excrement, while weaker

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<sup>232</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 72.

<sup>233</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 207.

<sup>234</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 16.



parts receive it. Society's body functions in the same manner.<sup>235</sup> *SRJ* conforms to and supports the second-century dependence on hierarchical order and authority for body, society, and the cosmos. As King notes: "[T]he generation in the Divine Realm originates in self-contemplation and proceeds according to the natural hierarchy of the divine will. By contrast, the world creator produces his minions by copulating with Aponoia ('Madness')." <sup>236</sup> The divine model succeeds because of its compliance with cosmic hierarchy while the counterfeit realm becomes self-destructive because of its disobedience to hierarchical order.

The success of this divine model holds the key to healing. As the 'human being' in *SRJ* appears as a First Thought and self-image of the true God (5:23-25), Wink argues that "God is envisioned here as Human in very essence."<sup>237</sup> Therefore God was understood as the archetype of humanity (as in *Gen* 1:26). He notes that this startling assertion could be read two ways: (1) that the human ego is so arrogant, it leads to the worst forms of anthropocentrism, answering to no one and nothing, or (2) that God permeates the universe, manifesting everywhere and is most humane. In this case, the Human Being is depicted "as a revealed archetypal image a transformative *truth that heals* by simple sight" (emphasis added).<sup>238</sup> It 'heals' the dark images of the control of Yaldabaoth, who thought he could inflict humans with passions, ready to destroy soul and body. Therefore, this healing characteristic of God – that God is the All-in-all permeation of the universe – is what governs the relationship with the body, and avers the truth of being that heals the body.

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<sup>235</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 31.

<sup>236</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 93.

<sup>237</sup> Walter Wink, *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of the Man* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002), 236.

<sup>238</sup> Wink, *The Human Being*, 237.

Eddy also taught God's authority to overrule evil powers that would dominate the body, but through a more decisive break with the lower powers. She concurred with Descartes that matter could have no cognisance of or engagement with the realm of Spirit or Soul, but her conclusions were drawn from a radically different basis. For her, the allness of God/Mind precluded the ontological existence of the opposite of Mind. In her Glossary in *S&H*, her definition of 'Creator' reads in part, "God, who made all that was made and could not create an atom or an element the opposite of Himself."<sup>239</sup> There is no opposite to be destroyed. This is the logic behind her interpretation of Jesus's statement concerning the destruction of the temple.

That Life is God, Jesus proved by his reappearance after the crucifixion in strict accordance with his scientific statement: "Destroy this temple [body], and in three days I [Spirit] will raise it up." It is as if he had said: The I—the Life, substance, and intelligence of the universe—is not in matter to be destroyed.<sup>240</sup>

The practical meaning of such a view is problematic, of course, since human beings perceive 'this temple' with their senses. Jesus referred to the physical temple the Jews were viewing.

But Eddy was not naïve about such obvious difficulties; she argued that willingness to come to terms with the discrepancy is the means by which humans gain their freedom from worldly powers (including disease). One of her explanations for the seemingly self-made action of the body demonstrates the effects of choosing between a lower power and God-given authority.

The body seems to be self-acting, only because mortal mind is ignorant of itself, of its own actions, and of their results, — ignorant that the predisposing, remote, and exciting cause of all bad effects is a law of so-called mortal mind, not of matter. Mind is the master of the corporeal senses, and can conquer sickness, sin, and death.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 583.

<sup>240</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 27. This Biblical reference is *John 2:19*: "Jesus answered and said unto them [to the Jewish leaders who had demanded a sign from him], Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

<sup>241</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 393.

As do many of Eddy's critics, sociologist Stark misunderstands this point, when he claims that "Christian Scientists deny the existence of all material things, yet they build churches. This sort of dualism is frequent."<sup>242</sup> Eddy's interpretation of Jesus's claim that he would rebuild the temple was based on the concept that the *idea* of the temple was just as permanent as his own life after the crucifixion. That was the reason his body could reappear to human sense. Stark's critique is based on the concept that churches (like the temple) are only made of bricks and mortar; they are not the expression of an idea. Such literalism not only obfuscates Jesus's teaching of the Jews but nullifies its healing import.

One point of agreement between *S&H* and *SRJ* about the body is that the body is the field on which the battle between the Spirit and material powers takes place. The body itself is not inherently evil or in need of destruction, even though Eddy's own students were often confused by her teaching on this matter. She clarified for them by question-and-answer: "If all matter is unreal, why do we deny the existence of disease in the material body and not the body itself?" Her reply is based on the distinction she discerns between Jesus's resurrection to his material body and his final ascension from it. She explained, "The *spiritual* body, the incorporeal idea, came with the *ascension*. Jesus demonstrated the divine Principle of Christian Science when he presented his *material* body absolved from death and the grave."<sup>243</sup>

Christian Scientists who appear to vacillate between the things that are 'seemingly true' and 'actually true' are attempting to grow toward a fuller and more steady understanding of the 'actually true.' Eddy warns that it is foolish to

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<sup>242</sup> Rodney Stark, "The Rise and Fall of Christian Science," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 13, no. 2 (1998): 196.

<sup>243</sup> The nuance of this explanation is difficult to summarise. See Eddy's complete answer to the question in Appendix 2, 'A Correction.' Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany* (Boston: The Christian Science Board of Directors, 1913), 217-218.

try to demonstrate what one does not fully understand. In mathematical metaphor, Eddy affirms, “No wise mother, though a graduate of Wellesley College, will talk to her babe about the problems of Euclid.”<sup>244</sup> Although the subject will be discussed in fuller detail in Chapter Six, it should be noted that this gradual approach to spiritual growth is the basis for the claim in the third theme that healing is correlated to a full salvation.

### Observations from the Conversation on Theme One

The most intriguing idea that surfaces from the conversation between these two texts on the first theme is that despite all the arguments of physical senses, emotions, and history to the contrary, both authors remain adamant that God is the supreme Creator/Actor of the universe. They both defend their positions based on the logic of creation, and they deny dualistic inferences. Ultimately they could appear to represent phases of the age-old Platonic and Aristotelian dichotomy in world thought. Although this tension continues to reassert itself through the ages, I do not identify it with *S&H* or *SRJ*, because they both contradict Platonic and Cartesian dualism with matter. The relevant issue is that either a larger Principle governs the universe, or every non-deific being is independently self-governed. Both authors confronted opposition within the context of their own cultures, but both also opposed victimisation through God’s constant healing power.

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<sup>244</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Unity of Good* (Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, MA, USA, 1887), 6.

## Chapter Five: Theme Two – Dealing with Evil

Theme two covers the subject of evil. It discusses how the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* understand it and explain the means of overcoming it. Evil in both cases is the contradiction of God's omnipresence and omnipotence, and is expressed as disease in individual bodies and in society. But the overall message from both authors is that neither people nor society should be victimised by evil, because evil, in all its guises, is exposed as fraudulent and impotent. Christ's healing presence comes to awaken those who experience sin, disease, and even death, to discern the reality of God's constant love. Theme two opens with the narrative interpretation of the second section in *SRJ*, again setting the stage for conversation. The rest of the conversation in theme two consists of three parts: (1) evil identified, (2) the theory of evil and opposition to it, and (3) application of the theories through healing.

### Interpretation of *SRJ* Narrative, Theme Two

*SRJ* established that the only valid creation is the product of Spirit. The offspring of Sophia,\* – Yaldabaoth,\* or the 'Chief Ruler' – attempts to create a new kingdom modelled after the indestructible realms above him, and he wrongly believes he exercises supreme power over it (10:19-11:6). He has no true creating power, though, since he is ignorant. Trying to model authority after the incorruptible realms of God/Mind, Yaldabaoth begets his 'ruling authorities' through union with *aponoia* (arrogance/ignorance/mindlessness/thoughtlessness/madness<sup>245</sup>) within himself

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<sup>245</sup> These terms are the translations of ἀΠΟΝΟΙΑ 'aponoia' from contemporary scholars: *arrogance* (Wisse) *ignorance* (Giversen), *mindlessness* (Meyer), *thoughtlessness* (Davies), *madness* (King).

(11:5,6). The result is that he creates ruling powers, or false entrapping gods, for the lower world.<sup>246</sup>

Sophia becomes aware of the evil consequences of her ignorance or willfulness, and repents of her mistake (14:10-11). “She began to be ashamed and she did not dare to return but she continued coming and going” (BG<sup>247</sup> 14:12-13). But Yaldabaoth persists in fabricating his counterfeit realm, attempting to create his own universe of humanity over whom he might exercise absolute power and become fully glorified. To do so, he brings demons\* into being, who in turn add psychic\* factors to the already spiritually whole human being. The creation of ‘psyche,’ or *soul*, is the means by which humans think their own *feelings* are more real than the knowledge they have been given from the divine Mind. Demons make and control all body parts (16:1-17:47), so that humans feel the control of demons, who either provoke passions (and thus disease), or keep the balance (thus preventing disease).

All three types of humanity frequently described in second-century literature<sup>248</sup> are now represented in Yaldabaoth’s creation: the perfect, (immovable race)<sup>249</sup>, the psychic (passion-driven soul), and the material (demon-controlled material body) (17:64). The goodness inherent in humanity remains, but each individual is liable to forget it through his or her identification with mindless matter, which has become the vehicle through which Yaldabaoth attempts to gain

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<sup>246</sup> Davies, *The Secret Book of John*, 66.

<sup>247</sup> ‘BG’ is the conventional abbreviation for the shorter version, officially titled ‘Codex Berolinensis Gnosticus 8505,’ and commonly referred to as the Berlin Codex. I used this translation in this instance, as it brings out the idea of the movement more clearly than the Codex II version I have otherwise used.

<sup>248</sup> Williams recognises that “the notion that humans consist of three elements, spirit (or mind), soul and body, is a familiar theme encountered in numerous traditions.... The apostle Paul speaks of the differences among spiritual, psychical, and fleshly person (1 Cor. 2:13-31).” *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 189.

<sup>249</sup> The ‘immovable race,’ sometimes translated ‘immovable generation’ or ‘generation that does not waver’ represented the highest spiritual attainment. The origin and meaning of this term was discussed in Chapter Four.

control over his creation. Identified as ‘the mother of all the demons’ (17:38-47), matter is thus identified as an immoral force, opposed to the infinitude of the infinite Spirit, and able to rouse the intensity of the worst passions (17:48-57). The flaw in Yaldabaoth’s plan, however, is that the psychic bodies include the means for salvation\* from his oppressive powers, as will be discussed more fully in theme three.

Attempting to bring life to his creation, Yaldabaoth himself is deceived, and his scheme to keep control over humanity backfires. He and his subordinate demons realise their created body remains inanimate (18:1). His mother Sophia, recognising the danger of her son’s perverted use of her power on humanity, requests the Father-Mother return her power to her. In response to her prayer, the representatives of the divine power convince Yaldabaoth to ‘blow of his Spirit’ into the motionless body he had created. As he does so, the power of his mother (Sophia) leaves him (Yaldabaoth) and enters into the psychic body (Adam’s body). Now the human obtains the mother’s power but also becomes greater than Yaldabaoth himself! He becomes enraged with envy toward his own creation (18:6-14).

This new Adam<sup>250</sup> resembles the human we recognise as ourselves. His feelings (from his *psyche*) are his source of perception, but he is also aware of his connectedness to the divine, while simultaneously subject to evil powers. His God is immaterial and often referred to as ‘Invisible Spirit,’ but he also conceives himself as constructed by demons.\* These are the demons that take hold of Adam’s thought and prevent him from knowing his true origin. “They picked him up and threw him down into the lowest part of all matter” (18:18).

This second account of Adam’s creation is evidently a counterfeit, opposing every aspect of the divine realm. Sinning and suffering originate in

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<sup>250</sup> The first (real) Adam had already come into existence in the Divine Realm. The new psychic body, created by Yaldabaoth’s minions, resembles the first Adam, except for his ignorance of his origin.

Yaldabaoth's devilish plan to mock the divine control over creation, and his fellow rulers and demons "enclosed him [Adam] in the shadow of death" (19:9). The body is not the enemy, but it becomes the battleground upon which the struggle for salvation takes place. Unintelligent matter, the true enemy of the human, is Yaldabaoth's one weapon for preventing the knowledge of one's original selfhood. Yaldabaoth intended for the material body to persuade the human psyche that he or she is locked inside fleshly limitation, pain, disease, misleading pleasure, and ultimate death. While each individual's original identity as the creation of Spirit/Mind appears to be buried in deceit, it remains intact during the battle between the true Spirit and counterfeit spirit of demons (18:24-29). Therefore the healing work of the Saviour is to arouse, awaken, and inform the psychic consciousness of the individual's innate spiritual wholeness and perfection.

## Evil Identified

The authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* treat evil as the great impotent and fraudulent power that deceives but cannot destroy. They both describe in detail the means by which those who suffer from this evil power are seduced and manipulated. The names and entities of the evil forces hardly appear to relate to each other, but the means of their evil ways are strangely similar.

## Second Century: Passions and Demons

In antiquity the general population feared 'passions' for their power to suppress self-control and cause emotional agitation, thereby disrupting the stillness essential to health and harmony for the 'immovable race.'<sup>251</sup> According to the highly influential Stoic philosophy, most external conditions existed outside the

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<sup>251</sup> Saxon, "Care of the Soul," 23, 152.



range of human control; however, emotions, or interior attitudes, could be disciplined.<sup>252</sup> The passions represented serious forms of evil to Christians too, but for different reasons. Whereas Stoics associated passions with false beliefs, Christians believed them to originate in demons external to themselves. Despite their different beliefs about the origin of the passions, the Stoics' four main categories of passions appear quite similar to *SRJ*'s four chief demons. The four include: distress (something evil is at hand); fear (there will be something evil in the future); delight (there will be something good in the present); desire (there will be something good in the future that one does not yet have) (17:48-57).<sup>253</sup> The *SRJ* narrative is driven by a yearning or freedom from the devastating effects of passions. As Williams describes the situation,

...the instability excited by the archons and demons takes its characteristic form in the churning nausea of deep-seated passions (grief, fear, desire, anger, etc.)—as difficult to root out as ingested bacteria. These turbulent passions, aroused deep within the individual, had to be eradicated in order for one to be perfect and therefore 'immovable.'<sup>254</sup>

The *SRJ* drama embraces the general second-century worldview of passions and demons, but it positions the Christian Saviour in a greater, cosmic battle with the demons (spirits) for control over human souls and bodies. According to the longer *SRJ* version, the four primeval demons—pleasure, desire, grief (or 'distress'), and fear—were responsible for causing all the passions to come into being, and *SRJ* specifies their demonic origins:

Ephememphi [a demon] is the one who belongs to pleasure. Yoko [the second demon] is the one who belongs to desire. Nenentophni [the third demon] is the one who belongs to grief. Blaomen [the fourth demon] is the one who belongs to fear. ... *The passions come into being from these four demons.* From grief (comes) envy, jealousy, suffering, trouble, pain, heartlessness, anxiety, mourning, and the rest.... (17:48-51, 53-54).<sup>255</sup>

<sup>252</sup> King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 42.

<sup>253</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 109-110.

<sup>254</sup> Williams, *The Immovable Race*, 152.

<sup>255</sup> The effects of the other three passions are as follows: "From pleasure comes much wickedness and empty boasting and similar things. From desire (comes) anger, wrath, bitterness, bitter yearning, insatiable greed and similar things. From fear (comes) panic, flattery, anguish, shame" (17:55-57).

These primary passions cause both physical and emotional disturbances – from ‘suffering, trouble, pain’ to ‘anxiety, mourning, and the rest.’ Perhaps bodily pains and emotional anguish are indistinguishable in antiquity, because, unlike modern views, both were seen as subject to outside influences. A demon could cause ‘anything which overtakes man,’ such as destiny, or death, or any good or evil fortune.”<sup>256</sup> Their ubiquitous presence represented the source of control or power over all aspects of life.

To bring the meaning of ‘demon’ (also known as *daimon*) closer to contemporary thought, the term ‘spirit’ works as a synonym:

The best notion to sum up these roles [for daimons] would seem to be ‘spirit.’ This idea allows for their role as messengers or agents of the gods, or spirits in opposition to the gods, guardian spirits of people or troublers of people, happy souls or spirits of the dead who are embittered and vengeful toward the living.<sup>257</sup>

Demons and their works were quotidian and typify the nature of evil in *SRJ*. Fearing demons was the original and most powerful motive for fasting, because even the simple act of eating gave demons power to control people.<sup>258</sup>

For a Stoic, curing a passion or a false belief was as crucial as it was for Christians, because it became the first line of defence for his own practical sovereignty and virtue.<sup>259</sup> Freeing himself to experience radical detachment, such as restraint from reaction to torture or the news of the death of his own child, would ensure him of success in his goal of extirpating, not merely subduing,

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<sup>256</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) s.v. ‘δαίμων,’ vol. 2, A2, 2.

<sup>257</sup> Wendy Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the study of New Testament Miracle Stories*, Context of early Christianity (London: Routledge, 1999), 77.

<sup>258</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. νῆστις, vol. 4, 926.

<sup>259</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 20, no. 2, (Fall 1987), 136-7.

passions.<sup>260</sup> By comparison, Christians also sought to defend sovereignty, but the power to banish the passion-causing demons and free the afflicted belonged to their Saviour, not to themselves. Jesus's role as Saviour will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Six, but it is important to note why Christians perceived a need to be saved from passions caused by demons. Jesus's victory over the ultimate passion shaped the Christian message of salvation, at least as described in *SRJ*. Modern Western Christians, more familiar with a bifurcated meaning of 'passion,' understand one definition as a strong emotion and the other as Jesus's suffering and death. But in the first century, Jesus's passion epitomised the worst of the passions, depriving him of his autonomy.

### *Demon Tactics and Counter Tactics*

In *SRJ*, a battle between spirits erupts when the counterfeit spirit discovers the superiority of the human he had tried to make in the image of the divine realm:

And his [the human being's] thought was superior to all those [the rulers and demons] who had created him. ... and they [rulers and demons] took counsel with the whole host of the rulers and the angels. They took some fire, earth and water. They mixed them together with each other and the four fiery winds. And they wrought them together and made *a great disturbance*. And they enclosed him [the superior human] in the shadow of death in order that they might yet again form from earth, water, fire, and spirit a thing from matter, which is the ignorance of the darkness desire, and their *counterfeit spirit* (emphases added) (19:2-11).

The behaviour of these demons/spirits fills a variety of agencies. In his jealousy and arrogance, the Chief Ruler (chief demon) took counsel with the rulers and angels/demons/spirits to cause a 'great disturbance.' The immovable generation had already been established when the Chief Ruler ordered this counterfeit creation, mocking the absolute control of the divine Being. The demons' (also

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<sup>260</sup> Nussbaum, "Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 130.

known as ‘archons\*,’ or rulers) deceitful mockery was their strongest weapon, as they tried to seduce the human away from his rightful place in the divine realm and tempt him in paradise. *SRJ* tells us that Yaldabaoth proclaimed

“[Paradise] is a delight for him” but really so that he might deceive him. For their delight is bitter and their beauty is licentious. Their delight is a deception and their tree is iniquity. Their fruit is an incurable poison and their promise is death to him (20:2-5).<sup>261</sup>

Demons could thus cause suffering, but only after first seducing their victims.

Another evil tactic, portrayed by Yaldabaoth’s manipulation in *SRJ*, was causing humans to fear and exalt the counterfeit power so that he could usurp the place of the divine Being. Before matter was created, Yaldabaoth introduced a self-consciousness of soul, so that humans would be conscious of their body parts through their feelings of passions instead of through knowledge from their original Creator Mind. For example, Goodness creates a bone-*soul*, Divinity makes a flesh-*soul*, and so forth (15:20-27).<sup>262</sup> In this way, demons could manipulate the feelings of mortals.

Magicians and other healers believed that knowledge of the demons’ names was a defence against their manipulative powers,<sup>263</sup> so their names listed in *SRJ* enabled the exorcist to cast them out. In one of his first acts as Chief Ruler, Yaldabaoth had created 365 demons to control his counterfeit creation, but significantly, since he could only imitate (not participate in) the divine realm, his demons had dual natures and dual names. Each one was assigned a destructive relationship with humans, but also included within itself a name that refers to a glory in the heavens. The act of counterfeiting served as a self-destructive act, because the corresponding heavenly identity ultimately destroyed each evil power.

The names which they were given by the Chief Begetter had power in them, but the names which were given to them according to the glory of

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<sup>261</sup> I used the translation of the shorter version for this quote, since its meaning is a bit clearer.

<sup>262</sup> As noted earlier in Chapter Five, ‘Healing as Alternative to Martyrdom.’

<sup>263</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, ix, 113.

those who belong to heaven are for them [the demons] destruction and powerlessness. Thus they have two names (13:17-20).

The detailed lists of demons in *SRJ* show exactly what body parts, material qualities, and passions the demons created and governed; and the wonderful secret message revealed to John (in the longer version) by his Saviour is the knowledge of these demon names!

Plotinus's third-century critique of some second- and third-century Christians inadvertently strengthens the argument for a connection between mental agitation and physical disease. Since *SRJ* was a prominent text during this time, and it bore such a significant message of healing, it is possible that Plotinus's critique was leveled at *SRJ* or at readers who associated themselves with it. Defending his own view that diseases resulted from overwork, overeating, malnutrition, or decay, Plotinus attacked his opponents (whom he identified as "the gnostics") for driving diseases out with words. While his rivals may have lacked the luxury to remedy an unbalanced diet or too much work, they were in a position to cure diseases if they were indeed caused by invasive demonic influences. Plotinus's complaint reveals his opponents' etiological beliefs: "They say that they cleanse themselves of diseases." This is possible because they claim "diseases are *daimonia* and they say that they are able to drive these out with words" (*Enn.* 2.9.14, 14-16).<sup>264</sup> Plotinus's disparaging remark unwittingly demonstrated the great benefit of harnessing demons with thoughts, a method used by Jesus and Paul.<sup>265</sup>

According to *SRJ*, disease did not originate in a material or biological sense, but from the soul-feelings that came with the body and from a demon. The Coptic (and Greek cognate) word *psyche*, usually translated as 'soul' in this text, "implies the presence of consciousness and divinity" and relates to "a person's

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<sup>264</sup> Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 133.

<sup>265</sup> Some examples include *Mark* 5:1-20, *Acts* 14:8-11.

conscious self or animating element.”<sup>266</sup> So these ‘soul feelings’ or sensations from the body made the people subject to passions, which, according to popular Stoic philosophy, caused sorrow, suffering, and disease in the body. And since matter has not yet been created in the narrative (but does indeed appear later), the *SRJ* Saviour saves sufferers from demon-induced *feelings* of pain, disease, or sorrow, rather than from a materially-defined event.

Whether manifesting themselves mentally or bodily, demons in *SRJ* reflect the widespread etiological concept in antiquity that they were responsible for passions and diseases.<sup>267</sup> The entire body is protected by the healer’s knowledge of the demons assigned to it. Thus the battle between the Saviour and the demons is transformed into a struggle against demon-controlled thought, fought on the battlefield of the body. When the creative work was finished, the material body “remained inactive for a long time because neither the seven authorities nor the 360 angels who had forged the links of the chain were able to awaken it” (18:1-2).<sup>268</sup>

Sophia wanted to rescind the power she had unintentionally given to Yaldabaoth, so she provided him with the power of life through her spirit. When the body moved and became luminous, however, it dawned on the Chief Ruler that he had been duped into giving his created being more understanding and power from the divine source than he had himself. Enraged, he and the rest of the demonic powers threw his creature down into the lowest part of all matter. Matter now represents the demons’ jailhouse, where the person’s soul loses contact with the divine realm, and no longer knows himself as the image and likeness of the Invisible Spirit. Despite the battle to come, the “Epinoia [one of the

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<sup>266</sup> Davies, *The Secret Book of John*, 92.

<sup>267</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, ix.

<sup>268</sup> This explanation of the inability of the authorities and angels to awaken the inanimate body only occurs in the shorter version.

characterisations of the Saviour] of the light who was in him is the one who will awaken his thinking” (19:15). As will be discussed later in this chapter, ‘awakening’ is the *SRJ* means for healing.

### Nineteenth Century: Demons and Animal Magnetism

Eddy also conceived of evil or demons as responsible for causing suffering and diseases with these common characteristics: evil appears deceptively like God; it is susceptible to rejection through words; it causes confusion between sensation and Mind; it responds to a specific name; it materialises thought; it battles for human life through the body; and it is ultimately overthrown by Christ. But Eddy’s nineteenth-century experience gave the practical knowledge of evil new relevance and language. She consistently held to the theological position that God’s allness and goodness precluded the possibility of evil’s presence or power. However, the intensity of her human experiences convinced her not only of the need to protect herself and her students from the unseen influences of evil, but also of the urgency of providing strict protection for and control over her own teachings.<sup>269</sup> In this section I will argue that despite her personal battles, Eddy maintains strict theological consistency.

Her conviction of the absolute goodness and omnipotence of God ushered her directly into the widespread and fiery nineteenth-century debates over animal magnetism. The merits – or evil – of this alternative medical practice, later known as ‘mesmerism,’ became the subject of fierce disputation in both America and Europe.<sup>270</sup> In the late eighteenth century, Franz Anton Mesmer (from whom the

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<sup>269</sup> Katie Simon, "Mary Baker Eddy's Pragmatic Transcendental Feminism," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 38, no. 4 (2009), 387.

<sup>270</sup> Winter explains that mesmerism had become the “occasion for contests over authority in science, medicine, and intellectual life alike....This book retrieves it from fringes of society and restores it to its central place among the preoccupations of Victorian culture.” Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian England* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

term ‘mesmerism’ was later derived) had identified ‘animal magnetism’ as a magnetic fluid that ‘magnetisers’ could use to produce cures.<sup>271</sup> In his medical studies at the prestigious University of Vienna, he had employed a Newtonian theory of celestial movement of the sun and moon to understand magnetism’s effects on the human body. A force he called ‘animal gravity’ influenced human bodies and caused illness by universal gravitation. The ‘planets’ (the sun and moon), therefore, held power for good or for ill over human health. But Mesmer had also become convinced that the astral plane and the human plane united in the harmony of the spheres, and through experiments in his own healing practice,<sup>272</sup> he discovered the healing magnetism based on influence or gravity. He named it ‘animal magnetism’ to distinguish the ‘animal,’ or ‘vital,’ fluid from his earlier focus on ‘mineral magnetism.’<sup>273</sup>

Ancient theories and practices hovered over these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century healing experiments. One example is the eighteenth-century belief in the connection between planets and parts of the body. This belief originated in antiquity, with a well-known astrological concept known as a ‘melothesia,’ a list of parts of the body and their connections with the planets. The

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<sup>271</sup> Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) viii.

<sup>272</sup> The decisive results from Mesmer’s treatment of Fräulein Francisca Oesterline in 1774 convinced him that he had discovered the mysterious magnetic fluid he later termed ‘animal magnetism.’ He had been treating her unsuccessfully for “various hysterical symptoms, including convulsions, vomiting, aches, fainting, hallucinations, paralysis, and trance.” As soon as he heard of Jesuit priest Maximillian Hell’s development of magnets, Mesmer used these magnets on Oesterline’s body and noticed currents of force moving through her body. After repeated adjustments of the magnetic force, he found the right balance of the currents of the animal gravity, and Oesterline reported a mysterious fluid coursing through her body. She also reported a remission of symptoms. Mesmer then distinguished his cure from Father Hell’s magnets by claiming his ability to ‘magnetise’ not only the steel (from the magnets) but paper, bread, wool, glass, water, men, dogs, and in fact, everything he touched. The most important magnet, he remarked, was the human body. This magnetism, channeled through his body, became ‘animal magnetism.’ Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud*, 5-7. Also Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 5-6.

<sup>273</sup> Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud*, 5-7. Also Albanese, *Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 191-192.



seven-fold soul of Adam in *SRJ*<sup>274</sup> belongs to this tradition, which combines the powers of the planets with the gods and their bodily soul-substances. King observes that “the names of the powers all suggest positive qualities [see the chart below]; these epithets are in fact false names, illustrating one of the strategies used by the archontic rulers to deceive humanity.”<sup>275</sup>

#### Melothesia

<i>Archons</i>	<i>Powers</i>	<i>Planets</i>	<i>Soul</i>
<i>Substances</i>			
Iaoth	Pronoia	Moon	Marrow
Eloaios	Divinity	Mercury	Bones
Astaphaios	Goodness	Venus	Sinews
Iao	Fire	Sun	Flesh
Sabaoth	Kingship	Mars	Blood
Adoni	Comprehension	Jupiter	Skin
Sabbaios	Wisdom	Saturn	Hair

Roelof van den Broek, “The Creation of Adam’s Psychic Body in the Apocryphon of John,” pp. 38-57 in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday*. Ed. R. van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren. Études préliminaires aux religions Orientales dans l’empire Romain 91. (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 48.

Eddy saw all of these thought-systems – Mesmer’s belief in celestial magnetism, ancient planetary control, the role of demons, and the deceptive nature of the demonic rule – ultimately as clear signs of the enemy’s tactics. But she was unaware of the extent of the falsity and presumed power of animal magnetism until she experienced it for herself. In a quest for her own health in her mid-forties, Eddy sought help from a magnetic doctor, Phineas P. Quimby. But she was unfamiliar with his treatment’s connection with animal magnetism. She was favourably impressed with the results, and expressed her gratitude to Quimby in a letter she submitted to the press. Some twenty years later, however, she described the reasons for her premature outpouring:

... at that time “as ignorant of mesmerism as Eve,” before she was taught by the serpent, and that her head had been “so turned by Animal

<sup>274</sup> *SRJ*’s slight variations of chapter 19 from this listed tradition imply its widespread use and its common use.

<sup>275</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 113.

Magnetism and will-power” under Quimby’s treatment “that I might have written something as hopelessly incorrect” as the letter in question.<sup>276</sup>

Gradually, although Eddy agreed with the theoretical reconfiguration of the relationship between bodily existence and states of consciousness, she discerned the dangerous symptoms of mesmerism in Quimby’s work. Submitting one’s consciousness to the control of another in any form of animal magnetism caused not only weakness, but vulnerability to the worst of human abuses.

Due in part to the practice of animal magnetism, another new form of mind-control – spiritualism – swept over the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, intensifying the discussions already underway in salons, lecture halls, homes, and scholarly journals.<sup>277</sup> Eddy objected to this free-formed religious movement with ties to earlier esoteric movements and transcendentalism,<sup>278</sup> because of its audacious claims of God’s communication through material, mortal means. Good is derived *only* from God, she argues, and cannot be communicated through material channels of self-seeking pleasures or through spirits of the departed:

In Science, *individual good derived from God*, the infinite All-in-all, may flow from the departed to mortals; ... The *joy of intercourse becomes the jest of sin*, when evil and suffering are communicable. Not personal intercommunion but divine law is the communicator of truth, *health*, and harmony to earth and humanity (emphasis added).<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Robert Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: Years of Discovery* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 168.

<sup>277</sup> Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud*, ix.

<sup>278</sup> Spiritualism was a highly popular American religious movement of the nineteenth century. Starting as a childish prank by Maggie and Kate Fox, Spiritualist ‘séances’ relied on the tapping of messages that resembled the new Morse Code communication system, and evolved into religious services, resembling the popular performances by Mesmer’s followers. Séances promised hope for many families who had lost loved ones in the American Civil War (discussed further in this chapter, “Evil and Nineteenth-century Society”) and yearned to communicate with them in the afterlife world. Spiritualism offered women positions of leadership and equal access to divine inspiration, but its most attractive component was its “thrilling experiential element” in stark contrast to the “extraordinary dullness” they experienced in established churches (115). Robert C. Fuller, *Religious Revolutionaries: The Rebels Who Reshaped American Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 113-116.

<sup>279</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 72.

Eddy<sup>280</sup> became entangled in the controversy over spiritualism because, despite her recognition of the potential power of healing in the mental realm, she agreed with other disbelievers in spiritualism that its teaching and practice was dangerous. Spiritualism's promises to provide channeling to departed loved ones or the long hoped for scientific proof of life after death<sup>281</sup> were, to Eddy, cruel and fraudulent. In her first edition of *Science and Health* (1875), Eddy compared these spiritualists, or "very gross materialists," with a "belief in spirits, [that] belongs to the darker ages," and considered their practices demonology.<sup>282</sup>

The demonic nature that Eddy associated with mesmeric practices reflects her concern for external, or invasive, influences. Both ancient and nineteenth-century demons relied on some form of material conduit to enact their powers, and for Eddy such material dependence challenged the sovereignty of God. She argued, "If Spirit, or God, communed with mortals or controlled them through electricity or any other form of matter, the divine order and the Science of omnipotent, omnipresent Spirit would be destroyed."<sup>283</sup> Therefore, the fundamental problem underlying all of the mesmeric, hypnotic, spiritualist forms of animal magnetism was the unseen evil it unleashed on humankind through a denial of God's omnipotent goodness. In *SRJ*, Yaldabaoth's attempt to create in

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<sup>280</sup> Mary Baker Eddy used different names for her public identity, according to her marital status. She was married three times, and in the custom of her day, she used her husbands' names as her last name. She maintained her maiden name 'Baker' most of the time. She used 'Mary Baker Glover' while she was married to her first husband, George Glover, who died after six months of marriage. She was 'Mary Baker Patterson' while she was married to her second husband, Daniel Patterson, whom she divorced on grounds of desertion. Finally, she usually used 'Mary B. G. Eddy' during and after her marriage to her third husband, Asa Eddy, who died after six years of marriage. When she published the first edition of *Science and Health*, following her divorce from Patterson, she had resumed the use of her first married name, Glover. After her marriage to Eddy in 1877, she kept his name for the rest of her life.

<sup>281</sup> Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41,42.

<sup>282</sup> Mary Baker Glover, *Science and Health*. (Boston: Christian Scientist Publishing Company, 1875), 66. Note that this reference is the first edition of *Science and Health*, published in 1875 and continuously revised until Eddy's death in 1910. At the time of this publication, 'Eddy' was divorced from Patterson and using her original married name, Glover.

<sup>283</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 73.

the image of the divine realm through a *counterfeit* spirit disrupted the whole creation. It also served as a denial of God's omnipotent goodness.

A diachronic perspective on Eddy's thirty-year learning process regarding the nature and treatment of animal magnetism in its various guises exposes in slow-motion the complexity of the issues. First, in her 1867 *Genesis* manuscript, which was the precursor to her book, *Science and Health*, she argued for the omnipotent sovereignty of God and God's will for healing, even though she considered Satan's presence and power to be ontologically real. By the time she published *S&H* in 1875, however, she conceived evil as a hypnotic, mesmeric *suggestion* operating through human will and corporeal senses. Finally she could no longer justify the power and reality of evil in the knowledge and presence of God's will. Theological resonances between *SRJ* and *S&H* surface again, because they each defend the continuity of God's goodness pouring forth from the Invisible Spirit or messengers, in contrast to the appearances of the counterfeit creator's demonic behavior and persistent willed harm. Both rationalised the conundrum with the counterfeit nature of the power of evil.<sup>284</sup>

By the late 1880s, less than a decade after publishing her chapter on Demonology, Eddy began to refine and de-personalise her teaching on 'malicious animal magnetism.' Its potential force for evil and interference in the success of the CS movement remained as vivid as ever to her and to her loyal followers, but her maturing view on the subject detached the evil from persons. It took many years for her to lessen her own and her followers' preoccupation with 'malicious animal magnetism.' The image of a hypnotised individual under the control of a despotic, trespassing, and predatory mesmeriser was terrifying enough, but Eddy's message extended to *any* kind of influence other than God. The primary

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<sup>284</sup> From *SRJ*: "From intercourse he [the Chief Ruler] caused birth in the likeness of bodies and he supplied them from his counterfeit spirit" (22:24). From *S&H*: "The temporal and material [the sources of suffering] are not then creations of Spirit. They are but counterfeits of the spiritual and eternal" (286).

theological point that strengthened her response to animal magnetism was its nonreality and its having power only insofar as one believed in it.<sup>285</sup> Whatever argued against the omnipotence of God was false, regardless of its virulent appearances. Finally, in the late 1890s, her approach had fully shifted to the affirmative side of CS. She made no mention of the phrase ‘malicious animal magnetism’ in her final class in 1898, and her method had evolved from censure and condemnation to inspiration and invigoration.<sup>286</sup>

Her final teaching on animal magnetism is codified in a brief six-page chapter in *S&H*. She acknowledges its supposed attraction, luring its victims with promises of healing and happiness only to attack and destroy, thus demonstrating the nature of animal magnetism as a wolf in sheep’s clothing. The authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* expose the specific seductive methods of the enemy by naming them (i.e. demons and animal magnetism) and articulating their tactics.

Yaldabaoth and his rulers put their human being in paradise, where “delight is bitter and their beauty is licentious” (20:3). And Eddy warns that from her own observations animal magnetism

is not a remedial agent, and that its effects upon those who practise it, and upon their subjects who do not resist it, lead to moral and to physical death. If animal magnetism seems to alleviate or to cure disease, this appearance is deceptive, since error cannot remove the effects of error.<sup>287</sup>

She loathes its despotic control, and urges that “Mankind must learn that evil is not power. Its so-called despotism is but a phase of nothingness.”<sup>288</sup>

But ‘nothingness’ does not appear as *nothing* to a mesmerised mind. Eddy defines that mind as ‘mortal mind’ and argues that the only remedy for it is the “truths of *immortal Mind*.” In *SRJ*, the human becomes a mortal when the

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<sup>285</sup> Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, 444.

<sup>286</sup> Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*, 412.

<sup>287</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 101.

<sup>288</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 102.

demons enclose him in the shadow of death, clothing him with the tomb of a molded body (19:12-13). This mortal's remedy is the "Epinoia\* of the light ...who will awaken his thinking" (19:15). Eddy's 'mortal mind' is relieved of its fables by the "truths of immortal Mind" which "sustain man, and they annihilate the fables of mortal mind, whose flimsy and gaudy pretensions, like silly moths, singe their own wings and fall into dust."<sup>289</sup> 'Mortal mind,' as defined by Eddy, is animal magnetism in action. She admits the term 'mortal mind' is a solecism in language, because Mind is properly a synonym of God and cannot become mortal. But because evil and good are commonly conceived together as 'mind,' she terms sick and sinful humanity as 'mortal mind' – "meaning by this term the flesh opposed to Spirit the human mind and evil in contradistinction to the divine Mind, or Truth and good."<sup>290</sup>

Elaborating on the mechanism of the so-called mortal mind, she explains that one must recognise the power of his or her own thought. "If you believe in inflamed and weak nerves, you are liable to an attack from that source. You will call it neuralgia [a nineteenth-century self-diagnosis], but we call it a belief. ...Your decisions will master you, whichever direction they take."<sup>291</sup> The reason we feel like victims of our own bodies, she explains, is that mortal mind does not know itself or its own actions."<sup>292</sup>

Yaldabaoth wishes his mortal creature to remain ignorant of the powers holding him in bondage. After depositing him in paradise, the Chief Ruler tries to hide the man's view of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because he fears the human might discover the truth about himself. In both *SRJ* and *S&H*, the demon (or animal magnetism) attempts to maintain control of the minds of

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<sup>289</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 103.

<sup>290</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 114.

<sup>291</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 392.

<sup>292</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 393.

mortals by keeping them ignorant of the truth of their freedom. The means by which the Saviour rescues in both *SRJ* and *S&H* will be more fully covered in Chapter Six.

Eddy had found it imperative to awaken readers to the dangerous aspects of evil and mesmeric powers. As she herself was accused of practising the precise forms of evil she opposed, so also CS was sometimes publicly characterised as an accommodation of the evil and mesmeric theories she denounced. She exposed the enemy as an impostor, a popular and yet *deceptive* healer. Yaldabaoth had created his demons to *look* like healers, but instead they were instructed to destroy.

## Theories of Evil and Its Demise

One of the six tenets of CS listed in *S&H* both provokes and inspires: “We acknowledge God’s forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the *belief* in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts” (emphasis added).<sup>293</sup> Reactions to the claim that ‘evil is unreal’ range from disgust over the thought that someone’s suffering could be so easily dismissed to a profound inspiration that uplifts and heals. *SRJ* denies the power of evil for healing and salvific purposes as well. For example: one can be “purified there [in paradise] from all evil and the enticements of wickedness” (23:6); and “those upon whom that Spirit comes will live in any case and come out from evil” (23:14); and Adam was said to be “naked of evil because he was wiser [than the Chief Ruler’s helpers]” (17:17). *SRJ*’s human can be purified of evil, come out from evil, and be naked of evil because the evil influences function only as counterfeit powers.

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<sup>293</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 497.

Although one could argue that the author of *SRJ* never denies the reality of evil as explicitly as Eddy does, I think the treatment of evil as a counterfeit power and substance creates the same effect within the second-century context. This section of theme two explores major theories behind the arguments in both texts: through understanding evil as a false belief, the need for spiritual knowledge (*gnosis*), the role of metaphysics, the problem with matter, and the false claim of Docetism. They all represent modes of thought that extend beyond outward appearances.

### Evil as Belief

Regardless of the meaning of ‘reality,’ both texts present an uncomfortable proposition in their defence of God’s goodness and supremacy: evil must have no power. Eddy argues its unreality, while the author of *SRJ* argues mastery over it. Of course, the promise from either one, that humanity is freed from the slavery of evil, is remarkable; but the overwhelming empirical evidence of evil’s reality and power generally evokes either scoffing or deep and serious reflection. But Eddy also affirms that “a sinner can receive no encouragement from the fact that Science demonstrates the unreality of evil,”<sup>294</sup> because when the sinner makes it real for himself, he inflicts his own punishment. This treatment of evil as a punishable belief resonates with *SRJ*, because in both cases, evil operates as a manipulation of thought where suffering takes place in mental darkness. To the sufferer in both texts, evil feels painful and real, not at all like a flight of fancy or imagination. In *SRJ*, while Adam is in paradise, the Chief Ruler (Yaldabaoth) brought a trance on him, but

the luminous Epinoia (a form of the Savior) appeared for she had uncovered *the veil* which had been on his understanding. He became sober

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<sup>294</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 339.



from *the drunkenness of the darkness* and he recognized his likeness (emphasis added) (21:18-19).<sup>295</sup>

The evil spell or trance cast upon Adam had made his heart heavy so that he might neither understand nor see (21:7).<sup>296</sup> This obstruction to his understanding could be likened to Eddy's 'belief' in sin, which is punished as long as the individual continues in false belief. For Eddy, God's forgiveness destroys sin, while in *SRJ* the light of the Saviour removes the veil covering Adam's understanding. Both authors confront evil with the authority of destroying its supposed powers for healing, in contrast to ignoring it or succumbing to it.

Opposition to a false *belief* in the reality of evil is crucial to Eddy's healing system. In an article entitled 'Christian Theism,' she explains why it is not necessary to believe in the reality of evil, and how the annihilation of an incorrect belief of evil does heal the sick:

What appears to mortals from their standpoint to be the necessity for evil, is proven by the law of opposites to be without necessity. ... Thus evil is neither a primitive nor a derivative, but is suppositional; in other words, a lie that is incapable of proof — therefore, wholly problematical.<sup>297</sup>

Ignorance, or belief in a falsity, is also the evil Yaldabaoth attempts to impose upon humanity, because it produces the blindness that separates humanity from God, which in turn causes 'severe sins' and 'great fears':

...from that Fate<sup>298</sup> appeared every iniquity and injustice and blasphemy and the fetter of forgetfulness and ignorance and every harsh command

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<sup>295</sup> This 'likeness' that Adam recognises turns out to be 'bone of his bones and flesh from his flesh' (21:20) and takes on the form of Eve (21:24), who is born not of a rib as in *Genesis*, but of the consciousness of light.

<sup>296</sup> I paraphrased this verse, combining words from both the shorter and longer version. The shorter version reads: "I will make the ears of their hearts heavy so that they might not understand and might not see." This verse in the longer version reads: "I will make their hearts heavy so that they might neither give heed nor see."

<sup>297</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 14.

<sup>298</sup> Lewis's study on fate in Greco-Roman antiquity argues that as a whole, 'Gnostic' groups did not suffer the burden of enslavement to fate in any absolute or enduring sense (28). Although fate certainly exists in these writings (as in this example from *SRJ*), it enslaves only the 'Other,' not the members of the group with whom the author identifies himself (28). By the time *SRJ* was written Stoic cosmology (including *heimarmene* or fate) had become an outdated, antiquated cosmology that could be juxtaposed against a new, enlightened worldview, such as the Christian one (92). Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism*, 28, 52, 92.

and severe sins and great fears. And this is how they made the whole creation blind so that they might not know the God who is above them all. And because of the fetter of forgetfulness, their sins were hidden (24:13-15).

A couple of verses later, the remedy is revealed through light of the Saviour and teaching of Noah:

“the greatness of the light of Pronoia [female Saviour figure] taught Noah<sup>299</sup>. And he preached to the whole offspring, that is, the children of the humans...And he understood his authority. And she who belongs to the light was with him for she illumined them...” (24:20-21, 27-28).

These two authors claim in highly contrasting ways that evil is experienced as mental delusion and that humanity is saved or healed by awakening from the lies. Eddy appeals to the operation of a perfect Principle, forming her argument on scientific logic, whereas the author of *SRJ* uses the narrative of a myth to demonstrate in story form the characterisation of evil and its demise. But neither one accommodates theoretical superficiality. Immediately after claiming the Truth that ‘deprives evil of all power,’ Eddy issues a warning that the perfunctory dismissal of evil is ineffectual, and its attempt leaves the sinner punished or suffering from his or her persistent mistaken belief. “But the sinner is not sheltered from suffering from sin: he makes a great reality of evil, identifies himself with it, fancies he finds pleasure in it, and will reap what he sows; hence the sinner must endure the effects of his delusion until he awakes from it.”<sup>300</sup>

Although *SRJ* does not make an outright rejection of the reality of evil, the possibility could be argued on four counts that evil described in *S&H* is diagnosed and treated similarly in *SRJ*. First, the divine realm consists of people who have experienced evil in a variety of forms, repented, and learned from their

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<sup>299</sup> Noah is introduced in this part of the narrative as part of *SRJ*'s revision of the early chapters of *Genesis* (2- 10). When the world rulers plot to flood the earth and destroy humanity, *Epinoia* instructs Noah to preach and save the people. This embellishment of the account of Noah and the flood in *Genesis* is another example of *SRJ*'s intent to teach a more enlightened perspective on the biblical record.

<sup>300</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 14-15. Some of Eddy's more detailed teachings on the subject of sin are available in her collection of essays from this book. The next several references to her work are taken from these essays.

experience. They had experienced the sin of willfulness (like Sophia), bodies of pain, and the ignorance imposed on ‘the penitents’ by the Chief Ruler, and as they were rescued and healed by the Saviour, they repented (or turned from) their false beliefs.<sup>301</sup> Second, by contrast, the existence and work of Yaldabaoth and his co-rulers consistently expose creation as a counterfeit and mockery of the original. The Saviour explains: “For my part, I [Epinoia or Jesus] will teach you about the mystery of their life. It is their counterfeit spirit which dwells in them, whose purpose is to make him wander so that he does not know his perfection” (20: 7-9). As with Eddy’s theological premise, the counterfeit mockery of *SRJ* consists of no substantive being.

Third, although the ‘penitent ones’ experienced something from which they were either saved or became repentant, they had been manipulated by the Chief Ruler, and their return to the divine realm is confirmation that they belonged there from the beginning. The mental manipulation did not alter their identity as God’s own. Fourth, those who returned to the divine realm experienced salvation, but not necessarily a departure from one real place to another real place. In all four examples, both authors treat evil as wrong, impotent, and fraudulent.

### The Need for *Gnosis*

The Greek word ‘*gnosis*’ was used widely with variations in meaning by nearly every author of New Testament, extracanonical, and philosophical texts. In John’s Gospel, Jesus’s use of it implies a relationship between knowing something

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<sup>301</sup> Sophia and other inhabitants needed to *understand* the powerlessness of evil, because they had all been duped in some fashion before they came to this heavenly realisation. The ‘seed of Seth,’ one of the categories of inhabitants of the divine realm, had been made to drink the water of forgetfulness by the Chief Ruler. Their healing was freedom from the deficiency of forgetfulness: “when the Spirit descends from the holy aeons, it will correct (the seed) and *heal* it from the deficiency so that the entire Fullness might become holy and without deficiency” (22:35-36).

and healing, or freedom from something undesirable: “You will know (γνώσεσθε, from *gnosis*) the truth, and the truth will make you free” (*John* 8:32). *SRJ* uses the term<sup>302</sup> in the same sense. Even though the meaning of *gnosis* was widely known in nineteenth-century theological circles as a kind of knowledge from God or about God, Eddy never used the term in her published writings. I argue that despite the difference in language, both authors rely heavily on this correlation of knowledge and freedom from evil to defend their methods of healing and salvation.

Eddy’s unwillingness to identify with *gnosis* may stem from nineteenth-century scholarship on Gnosticism, with which she concurred. Williams confirms that the Greek term ‘*gnosis*’ had taken on a special meaning through the history of scholarship now associated with the Nag Hammadi collection and other related texts. He explains the origin and use of the term, ‘*gnosis*.’

Initially, the category ‘gnosis’ or ‘gnosticism’ in modern scholarship was constructed on the basis of what was perceived to be the self-definition of early Christian ‘heretics’... The heresiologists speak of some persons in these circles who appeal to *gnosis*, ‘knowledge,’ and refer to themselves as *gnostikoi*, ‘gnostics.’ ... The category ‘gnosis’ or ‘gnosticism’ was eventually made to accommodate all groups that were perceived to have certain doctrinal similarities to Valentinians and the others, whether or not there was evidence that the actual self-designation ‘gnostic’ was used.<sup>303</sup>

Without any reference to special identification of groups of people, the author of *SRJ* used the term, best translated as ‘knowledge,’ as a remedy for suffering. A typical example is the Saviour’s explanation to John that receiving knowledge would save people from the suffering inflicted by demons and evil rulers. The ‘despicable spirit’<sup>304</sup>

burdens the soul and draws it into works of wickedness, and he [the evil spirit] casts it down into forgetfulness. ... And they [evil rulers] bind it in chains and cast it into prison. And they [evil rulers] consort with it until it

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<sup>302</sup> Both the Greco-Coptic loan word ΓΝΩΣΙΣ (γνῶσις) and the Coptic COOYN (meaning acquaintance, knowledge) are used in *SRJ*.

<sup>303</sup> Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 30-31.

<sup>304</sup> Or, “counterfeit spirit” in the shorter version.

awakens from forgetfulness and *receives knowledge* (ΜΠCOON). And in this way, it is perfected and saved (OYXΔI) (23:27, 29-31).

Concepts of ‘gnosis’ presented in *SRJ* were similar to those of Paul and his better-known contemporaries, the Greek philosophers and the healing magicians some of whose writings are collected in the *magical papyri*.<sup>305</sup> All saw knowledge as requisite for freeing people from demons and other evil spirits, for healing. However, the Greeks believed in the power of human education;<sup>306</sup> the magicians, in the power of the code words, symbols and gestures they used;<sup>307</sup> and Paul, in the power of spiritual knowledge from God.<sup>308</sup> Paul and *SRJ* shared the view that the source of the knowledge that protected and healed was divine, not human.

For several hundred years after Jesus, Paul, and *SRJ*, the patristic age continued to emphasise sapience – the correct information about God – and attachment to that knowledge, but with a shift in focus on such knowledge as the foundation of human excellence.<sup>309</sup> One possible explanation for the change could be Justin Martyr’s different perspective on real knowledge. A likely contemporary of the second-century author of *SRJ*, he claimed he found ‘true knowledge’ when he discovered the school of Christ. He and the author of *SRJ* both appealed to revelation and prophecy to discern Christ’s truth, but, as King notes, “Justin tied his Christology to the truth of Scripture, while *ApJohn* [or, *SRJ*] determined Scriptural truth or falsehood on the basis of Christology.” The result of their

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<sup>305</sup> Our knowledge of the ancient magicians comes from the Greek magical papyri, which is an important collection of second to fifth century Greco-Roman Egyptian writings that contain magical spells, formulae, rituals, and hymns. The interwoven relation between magic and healing is evident in this work, as most of the rituals were performed for the purpose of healing. These spells and rituals expressed a variety of religious beliefs throughout the entire area.

<sup>306</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 186.

<sup>307</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 185.

<sup>308</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 185.

<sup>309</sup> Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.

differences was that they resolved problematic Scriptural passages on opposing platforms, and “at stake was the very authority on which Christianity was based.”<sup>310</sup> Theological ideas tend to follow power, and it is not surprising that the views of the meaning and value of knowledge (*gnosis*) would have followed the pattern mentioned above by Williams as a formula for identifying heresy.

By the seventeenth century, theologians began to dismantle the notion of sapience altogether and established the intellectual justification of the faith.<sup>311</sup> Some two hundred years later, Eddy joined her contemporaries’ disdain for the ‘Gnostic heretics,’ although without access to the content of such texts as *SRJ*,<sup>312</sup> she unknowingly agreed with its claim to the salvific power of knowledge (*gnosis*). The knowledge of God was more than an intellectual exercise for her; it was crucial for overcoming the effects of evil and experiencing eternal life. Appealing to Jesus’s teachings and using the English term, ‘knowledge,’ she explains:

This is life eternal,” says Jesus, — is, not shall be; and then he defines everlasting life as a present *knowledge* of his Father and of himself, — the knowledge of Love, Truth, and Life. “This is life eternal, that they might *know* Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent (emphasis altered).”<sup>313</sup>

Both Eddy and *SRJ* regard this knowledge as the most precious gift to humanity. The message to John (the disciple in *SRJ*) was sacred and precious: “Cursed be any one who should exchange these things for a gift...” (27:11).

Both authors emphasise the need to know something from or about God to know the identity, names, and modus operandi of evil spirits, and this knowledge gives their readers what they need to awaken from the delusion, or false belief in

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<sup>310</sup> King, *What is Gnosticism?* 28-29.

<sup>311</sup> Charry, *Renewing of Your Minds*, 5.

<sup>312</sup> Further discussion of Eddy’s views on extracanonical texts is in Chapter Seven, “Relationship between Ancient and Nineteenth-Century Texts.”

<sup>313</sup> Most of Eddy’s biblical quotes are from the King James Version, as in this case (*John* 17:3). When referencing biblical texts either quoted by her or used in her time, I use KJV. Eddy, *Science and Health*, 410.

the power of evil. Understanding the cultural context of *gnosis* and its relationship with demons in the second century strengthens the view that *SRJ*'s long list of demons serves the purpose of healing. For Eddy, the knowledge required for healing also required a spiritual, not a medical or social, outlook. As the healer in *SRJ* must know specific names of demons, so Eddy also teaches the importance of addressing a disease-spirit by name: "To prevent disease or to cure it, the power of Truth, of divine Spirit, must break the dream of the material senses. To heal by argument, find the type of the ailment, *get its name*, and array your mental plea against the physical (emphasis added)." <sup>314</sup> Eddy is not suggesting one should seek a medical diagnosis, <sup>315</sup> but the proper knowledge (*gnosis*) to identify, or name, the specific error of thought that is troubling the patient, helps to break the dream of evil's power. Eddy's demons lacked personality, however, and she taught that healing 'by argument' against demonic influences should be a second option when the healing did not occur spontaneously. The preferred way for Eddy was to attain "rapport with the divine Mind," the source of all useful knowledge and healing. <sup>316</sup>

### The Metaphysical Approach to Evil

When evil appears and behaves differently from the ontological reality of good, its treatment becomes more complex than a duel between closely matched opponents. Metaphysics, an umbrella term relating to concepts of existence extending beyond time, space, and substance, provides a valuable tool for

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<sup>314</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 412.

<sup>315</sup> In fact, elsewhere in *S&H*, she counsels that a medical diagnosis is more damaging than helpful. "The moral and spiritual facts of health, whispered into thought, produce very direct and marked effects on the body. A physical diagnosis of disease — since mortal mind must be the cause of disease — tends to induce disease." Eddy, *Science and Health*, 370.

<sup>316</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 84.

articulating the means by which the reality of God's goodness supersedes evil's claim to reality in both *SRJ* and *S&H*. Albanese makes the case that American metaphysical religion came to full bloom in the nineteenth century, "in the midst of a yearning for salvation understood as solace, comfort, therapy, and healing."<sup>317</sup> Such terminology was not in use in the second century, but I will argue that the theological meaning Eddy brought to her contemporary metaphysical methods is similar to the theological meaning of *SRJ*'s approach to evil.

Albanese characterises metaphysical forms of religiosity as a theory of correspondence between worlds, as in the Lord's Prayer: "on earth as it is in heaven" (*Matt 6:10*), and in this flow of divine energy toward earthly experience, one can experience the healing salve for all human ills.<sup>318</sup> But she defines this metaphysical practice as 'magic.' Naturally a practitioner of such practices would object to the term, as it conveys a pejorative sense of gullibility and human concoction. Her definition is instructive, however, for distinguishing it from Eddy's meaning of healing metaphysics:

In mental magic, the field is internalized, and the central ritual becomes some form of meditation or guided visualization – so that the mental powers of imagination and will can affect and change the material order, abolishing apparent flaws by realizing its unity with a cosmic Source.<sup>319</sup>

There are, admittedly, elements of this definition that fit the description of 'healing' in Eddy's system, thereby classifying it within Albanese's metaphysical religion category. A 'guided visualization' could be understood as prayer; 'mental powers' could be known to 'affect and change' the human experience; 'apparent

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<sup>317</sup> Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 15.

<sup>318</sup> Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 6.

<sup>319</sup> Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 6. Also of note is Albanese's distinction between 'material magic' and 'mental magic' in her article, Catherine L. Albanese, "Introduction: Awash in a Sea of Metaphysics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 3 (2007), 585: Material magic uses "spells, symbols, artifacts, and actions to create an imaginary [sic] for the change one desires;" mental magic is "of vision, reverie, meditation, and affirmative prayer."



flaws' could be abolished; and 'unity with a cosmic Source' would be true if that Source were understood as God. However, Eddy would have disagreed with Albanese's definition because she taught that the 'mental powers of imagination and will' are actually the *enemy* itself, not the source of healing. Eddy argues, "Human will-power is not Science. Human will belongs to the so-called material senses, and its use is to be condemned. Willing the sick to recover is not the metaphysical practice of Christian Science, but is sheer animal magnetism."<sup>320</sup> Albanese's inclusion of human will in the practice of healing, therefore, contrasts strikingly with Eddy's serious battle with it, as a form of animal magnetism. The human mind, operating as animal magnetism, purports to heal without the action and will of the divine Mind, and therein lies its danger, according to Eddy.

Homeopathy, a popular new medical practice in the mid-nineteenth century, shed light on the mental connection with disease,<sup>321</sup> as a scientific skepticism of drugs permeated society. According to its founder Hahnemann, homeopathy was based on the theory that diseases were the immaterial alterations of a vital principle, and they should be combatted by forces of the same kind. Therefore as English homeopathist and Swedenborgian J.J. Garth Wilkinson asserted, the efficacy of drugs lay in part in "the smallness of the doses," and these small attenuations "are more like ideas than material bodies."<sup>322</sup> Eddy's own medical experiments in the 1850s, including homeopathy,<sup>323</sup> led her to realise the

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<sup>320</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 144.

<sup>321</sup> Similar experiments with placebos yield similar conclusions today. Examples: Cara Feinberg, "The Placebo Phenomenon," *Harvard Magazine* (January-February 2013 2013): 36-39. Also Margaret Talbot, "The Placebo Prescription," *The New York Times magazine* (9 January 2000), <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/09/magazine/the-placebo-prescription.html>.

<sup>322</sup> Peel, *Years of Discovery*, 135-136.

<sup>323</sup> A case Eddy had taken of a woman with a dropsical condition became for her "a falling apple [that] made plain to [her] that mind governed the whole question of her [patient's] recovery." She administered increasingly diluted doses of the drug until they became only sugar pellets. Norman Beasley, *Mary Baker Eddy* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1963), 347. Quoted from Eddy's interview with the Masters in the Next Friends' Suit, 1907.

power and mechanism of the mind, until she finally concluded that metaphysics had become “the next stately step beyond homœopathy.”<sup>324</sup>

The next ‘stately step’ for Eddy was her rejection of material conduits or substances altogether. Eddy proclaims in *S&H* that “Metaphysics is above physics, and matter does not enter into metaphysical premises or conclusions. The categories of metaphysics rest on one basis, the divine Mind. Metaphysics resolves things into thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul.”<sup>325</sup> Therefore her understanding of metaphysics contrasts dramatically with Albanese’s definition, where “the mental powers of imagination and will can affect and change the material order.”<sup>326</sup> For Eddy, the ideas of Soul/God are the *only* source of true ‘mental powers,’ whereas Albanese conceives of metaphysical healing power originating in human imagination and will. Eddy’s rejection of matter and reliance on “one basis, the divine Mind”<sup>327</sup> is strikingly similar to *SRJ*, but contrary to Albanese’s mental powers of the human will. For the author of *SRJ*, the mother of matter is the source of demonic work (17:40,47), the counterfeit of genuine Mind, or reality. Without acknowledging this fundamental difference, Eddy’s healing system is incorrectly lumped together with what she (Eddy) conceived as the source of evil, or disease, itself – animal magnetism or mesmerism.

While Albanese’s metaphysical categories directly contradict Eddy’s understanding of what she terms ‘divine metaphysics,’<sup>328</sup> she rightly categorises CS

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<sup>324</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 156.

<sup>325</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 269.

<sup>326</sup> Albanese, *Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 7.

<sup>327</sup> Referencing footnote 325, Eddy, 269.

<sup>328</sup> In one of her clearest distinctions between philosophical metaphysics and what she terms ‘divine metaphysics,’ Eddy critiques Bishop Berkeley’s 1710 book entitled *Treatise Concerning the Principle of Human Knowledge*. “Its object,” she argued, “was to deny, on received principles of philosophy, the reality of an external material world. ... Making matter more potent than Mind, when the storms of disease beat against Bishop Berkeley’s metaphysics and personality he fell, and great was the fall — from divine metaphysics to tar-water!” (Berkeley had begun to use tar water for

in related aspects. For instance, Albanese argues that North American metaphysicians back away from Ahlstrom's "well-known rubric of harmonialism." His idea that "harmonial religion encompasses those forms of piety and belief in which spiritual composure, physical health... flow from a person's rapport with the cosmos"<sup>329</sup> is true concerning the 'rapport with the cosmos.' But, she continues, the pre-occupation of metaphysicians with sickness, sin, and death cannot be 'harmonised' with principle or 'Truth.'<sup>330</sup> Eddy's metaphysics both agrees and disagrees with Albanese's assessment of its relation to harmonialism. In agreement with both Albanese and Ahlstrom, Eddy affirms humanity's unity with God (which is close, but not exactly 'rapport with' the cosmos): "With one Father, even God, the whole family of man would be brethren; and with one Mind and that God, or good, the brotherhood of man would consist of Love and Truth, and have unity of Principle and spiritual power which constitute divine Science."<sup>331</sup> Eddy's affirmations of the lawlessness of evil agree with Albanese's claim that sickness, sin, and death would never 'harmonize' with Truth: "Sickness, sin, and death are not concomitants of Life or Truth. No law supports them. They have no relation to God wherewith to establish their power."<sup>332</sup>

However, in defence of her position that metaphysicians never harmonise human ills with 'Truth,' Albanese extends her argument to say that "Indeed, metaphysicians did not harmonize with reality but argued, instead, with error." 'Reality,' in the context of her discussion, is "present-day life," including sin,

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medicinal purposes for himself.) Mary Baker Eddy, *Message to The Mother Church Boston, Massachusetts June, 1901* (Boston: The Christian Science Board of Directors, 1901), 24.

<sup>329</sup> Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 1019.

<sup>330</sup> Albanese, "Awash in a Sea of Metaphysics," 584.

<sup>331</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 469.

<sup>332</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 196.

sickness, and death. Eddy radically diverges from these metaphysicians and from Albanese with a distinction between the ‘reality’ of harmony and the ‘errors of corporeal sense’ of sickness, sin, and death. “Reason, rightly directed, serves to correct the errors of corporeal sense; but sin, sickness, and death will seem real (even as the experiences of the sleeping dream seem real) until the Science of man’s eternal harmony breaks their illusion with the unbroken reality of scientific being.”<sup>333</sup>

‘Rapport with the cosmos’ stems from the ancient cosmological theory of correspondence between worlds, as in Platonic speculation where the realm of Ideas maintains continuity with the material cosmos. But the ‘rapport’ envisioned by *SRJ* proceeds from ‘Epinoia of the light, who is called ‘Life,’ and who illumines Adam. King interprets the *SRJ* contradiction to Plato’s correspondence as a warning against deceit:

As we have seen, for Plato and most of those who followed him, the correspondence between the model and the cosmos ensured the possibility of stable knowledge, while for the Secret Revelation of John it leads only to deceit and entrapment; only the revelation of Christ can ensure stable knowledge of immutable Truth.<sup>334</sup>

Interpretations of such ‘rapport with the cosmos’ have been expressed in overlapping and competing variants throughout the history of religious thought.

Since the human body was conceived as a microcosm in which the body consisted of the *same* elements of the entire macrocosmic cosmos, a human being was not so distinct from the rest of the cosmos. According to Albanese this type of ancient mystical macrocosmic-microcosmic equivalence became one of the most prevalent forms ‘rapport’ that deeply impacted American metaphysical tradition. The prior existence of a macrocosm modelled the microcosm (the smaller human and sometimes natural world or mind).<sup>335</sup> Similarly, Eddy’s metaphysical notion

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<sup>333</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 494.

<sup>334</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 201.

<sup>335</sup> Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 13-14.

of the relationship between the divine and the human dissolves the dualistic sense of two dissimilar worlds altogether. Just as geocentric and heliocentric systems do not coexist, neither do Spirit-caused and matter-caused realities coexist.

Despite the variations among them, these metaphysical systems unite in their “yearning for salvation understood as solace, comfort, therapy, and healing.”<sup>336</sup> American metaphysics, while concerned with what lay beyond the physical, distinguished itself from occult tendencies with its pragmatism and earth-oriented purpose. And Eddy’s metaphysical system concurs with this overall view of healing; however, both she and *SRJ* differ from other ancient and modern metaphysical systems with their disagreement with dualist views of reality. For Eddy, metaphysics is God-centric; “it treats of the existence of God, His essence, relations, and attributes.”<sup>337</sup> Metaphysics in both *S&H* and *SRJ* exalts God as the *only* real power, the only real Mind (in *S&H*) or causative force (in *SRJ*), and it confronts evil by dissolving the painful sense of its reality. Eddy’s biographer, Gottschalk explains, “If one experiences the reality and goodness of God as infinite Spirit and Love, then, Eddy believed, hatred, sin, and all material limitation must have a correspondingly diminished reality.”<sup>338</sup> *SRJ* begins with an affirmation of the fullness, power, majesty, and goodness of God; the struggle with an evil counterfeit reality ultimately yields to the authority of God’s supremacy.

Who is it who calls my name and from where does this hope come to me who am dwelling in the fetters of the prison? And I said, ‘I am the Pronoia of the pure light; I am the thought of the virginal Spirit, the one who raises you to the place of honor. Arise and remember that you are the one who has heard, and *follow your root*, which is I, the compassionate’ (26: 24-29).

Viewed anachronistically from a modern metaphysical perspective, ‘following your root’ parallels with Eddy’s root connection “with one Father, even God,”

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<sup>336</sup> As quoted above. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 15.

<sup>337</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 69.

<sup>338</sup> Gottschalk, *Rolling Away the Stone*, 75.

with whom “the whole family of man” has “unity of Principle and spiritual power...”<sup>339</sup> Both statements endorse the reality of one’s connection with God as a means to escape from the oppression of materialism or evil.

### The Problem of Matter

Discerning the image and likeness of God (*SRJ*’s ‘Invisible Spirit’ or *S&H*’s ‘infinite Spirit’) presents a problem of matter, which is unlike immeasurable Spirit. For the authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H*, matter interferes with the harmonious relationship between God and God’s image and likeness, and therefore it is treated as an expression of evil. A Saviour needs to facilitate the escape from the thralldom of matter and the return to the original image and likeness of God. Although the Coptic ΤΖΥΛΗ (cognate in Greek, *hyle*) is usually translated as ‘matter’ in modern English, the meaning of the word shifted considerably from antiquity to the present day, especially after the seventeenth century. Descartes’s dichotomies between body and mind (or soul), physical and spiritual (or psychological), matter and nonmatter, nature and supernature<sup>340</sup> set in motion a growing conviction in a worldview that “by their very substances” they became an ontological dualism.<sup>341</sup> Therefore, although the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* undoubtedly conceived the substance of matter quite differently, they both argued for its deceptive and ultimately destructive force. They both maintained a philosophical conviction of its evil nature.

Stoic philosophers taught the virtue of denouncing sensations and emotions, but they were fundamentally materialists who struggled to achieve the

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<sup>339</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 169.

<sup>340</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 6.

<sup>341</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 4. See discussion on Dualism in Chapter Four.

virtue of self-control.<sup>342</sup> Fear of material conditions outside their control fortified their focus on interior attitudes, where a person could choose to live peacefully *with* nature and reason.<sup>343</sup> The author of *SRJ*, on the other hand, offered a solution *beyond* the manipulative forces of matter, existing in a peaceful mental, or spiritual, state. This was a somewhat easier theological move to make before seventeenth-century Cartesian dichotomy regarding substance and reality became so firmly ingrained in human thought.

In *SRJ*, the counterfeit creation (with which readers were expected to identify until they were saved) appears as an image of the invisible Spirit, but it occurs by reflection in the waters that dwell *under* matter. It causes trembling and quaking, the great disruption to the immovable race:

The Aeon of the Chief Ruler [Yaldabaoth] trembled all over and the foundations of the abyss quaked. And upon the waters which dwell under matter,<sup>344</sup> the underside was illumined by the appearance of his image which had been revealed....And he said to the authorities who dwell with him, 'Come, let us create a human according to the image of God and according to *our* likeness so that *his* image might illuminate us' (emphasis added) (15:8-9, 12-13).

Yaldabaoth attempted to create his matter-based likeness in the image of his Spirit-originated selfhood. But the human retained his inherent spark of divine light, provoking his creator to jealousy. In his jealous rage, Yaldabaoth tried to confine his human to material limitation, disease, and death, but the Saviour came to provide the means of escape and reunification with God's realm.

Eddy conceived of CS – when conscientiously practised – as a liberator from modern-day materialism also. In his biography of Eddy, *Rolling Away the*

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<sup>342</sup> For clarifying analysis of Stoic philosophy and goals, see Nussbaum, "Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 129-77.

<sup>343</sup> King, *Mary of Magdala: First Woman Apostle*, 43.

<sup>344</sup> Davies explains that "As does the Hebrew Bible in Genesis 1:6-8, the Secret Book of John [or, *SRJ*] assumes that above the sky is water and below the earth is water. If you look up beyond the stars into the blackness of night, what you see is water." Davies, *Secret Book of John*, 88.

*Stone*, Gottschalk explains the metaphor for the title of his book, which was used occasionally by Eddy as a reference

to the Gospel accounts of the rolling away of the stone from the place where the resurrected Jesus had been entombed. “What is it,” Eddy asked at an Easter service...” that seems a stone between us and the resurrection morning? That stone,” she said, “is the belief of mind in matter.”<sup>345</sup>

And elsewhere she said, “this stone, in a spiritual sense, is the human view entertained of the power, resistance, and substance of matter as opposed to the might and supremacy of Spirit.”<sup>346</sup> She encouraged Christians to experience the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus in such a way that they could also know the victory over all the ills of materialism.<sup>347</sup>

Materialism, when it opposes a deep communion with God, presents a moral issue, but the existence of matter itself constitutes a theological problem as well: could matter be an eternal substance, and if so, what kind of substance is it? King explains the concerns in antiquity: “If matter is preexistent, then it is eternal; if it is created, then it is subject to destruction.”<sup>348</sup> Though only a few early philosophers posited that matter was created out of nothing, Cicero described the more common Platonist position:

But they [Platonists] hold that underlying all things is a substance called ‘matter,’ entirely formless and devoid of all ‘quality,’...and that out of it all things have been formed and produced, so that this matter can in its totality receive all things and undergo every sort of transformation throughout every part of it, and in fact even suffers dissolution, not into nothingness but into its own parts.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> The notion of ‘mind in matter’ was used frequently by Eddy to indicate the problem of consciousness or being confined within and defined by unintelligent finiteness.

<sup>346</sup> Gottschalk, *Rolling Away the Stone*, 2.

<sup>347</sup> The fifth tenet of CS is an example of her view that Jesus’s followers should expect transformation from a deep understanding of his resurrection: “We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.” Eddy, *Science and Health*, 497.

<sup>348</sup> King, *Mary of Magdala: First Woman Apostle*, 45.

<sup>349</sup> H. Rackham, ed. and trans., *Cicero*. Vol. XIX. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 439. *Academia Posteriora* I, 27. As quoted in King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*, 45.



The Saviour in the *Gospel of Mary* (another extracanonical text of the period) agrees that everything, including the material realm, will dissolve back into its own proper root; if existence is material, “it is temporary, and therefore the world and the body have no ultimate spiritual value.”<sup>350</sup> In *SRJ* the temporary nature of matter’s power is evident in its Saviour’s declaration that he had raised up the human being out of the foundations of chaos, darkness, Hades, the prison of the body so that death would no longer have power from that day on (26:7, 13, 21, 31-33). According to the *Gospel of Mary*, mainstream Cicero, and (by implication) *SRJ*, matter is mutable because it can return to its roots, so the Saviour rescues victims of matter and renders matter powerless.

Eddy’s position is that matter is rendered powerless by virtue of its *unreal* (or counterfeit) nature. Whatever claim to power it might hold dissolves, as matter returns to its ‘roots’ – nonexistence. Despite the logic of her denial of matter, Eddy is acutely aware of the difficulty posed by the physical senses and their report of the existence of matter. Defending her consistent conviction in the reality of God/Spirit and consequent *unreality* of Spirit’s opposite, she turns to astronomy to cast doubt on the senses’ evidence:

The sun is the central stillness, so far as our solar system is concerned, and the earth revolves about the sun once a year, besides turning daily on its own axis. As thus indicated, astronomical order imitates the action of divine Principle; and the universe, the reflection of God, is thus brought nearer the spiritual fact, and is allied to divine Science as displayed in the everlasting government of the universe.<sup>351</sup>

This brief analogy contains a tightly packed premise for her entire theological system: God is the absolute Principle that governs all aspects of creation and being, whereas the physical senses are unreliable, and actually *reverse* the divine order. This idea was so radical and yet so fundamental to its practical import, it deserves a more thorough explication. Since the discovery of the

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<sup>350</sup> King, *Mary of Magdala: First Woman Apostle*, 45.

<sup>351</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 121.

heliocentric order of our solar system, people have grown accustomed to distrusting their physical senses regarding the movement of the sun. Daily, we observe its appearing, rising up in the eastern sky, moving overhead, and descending past the horizon in the west. Based on empirical evidence alone, we conclude that the sun revolves around the earth. But with sufficient instruction in mathematics and astronomy we can be convinced that the opposite is true: the sun is stationary in relation to the earth, and the earth is revolving around the sun. If we were able to observe the earth from the perspective of the sun, we would easily see the proper relationship. Rather than relying on evidence from our senses, we turn to astronomical calculations to *reverse* the personal view and discern the true relationship between earth and sun. “As thus indicated,” Eddy explains, “astronomical order imitates the action of divine Principle; and the universe, the reflection of God, is thus brought nearer the spiritual fact, and is allied to divine Science as displayed in the everlasting government of the universe.”<sup>352</sup>

The image and likeness of God’s creating is, in this manner, the reflection of the original and governed by it. The human tendency is to invert the scientific view – or God’s view – as we do when we talk about the *sunrise* and *sunset*, and to deduce our knowledge from the perspective of our brains, or sensation. We thus tend to imagine God in our own image and likeness, capricious and unwilling or unable to prevent disaster. But unlike the prayer that asks God to fix things, Eddy conceives of prayer as an adjustment in *human* thought to align itself with God:

Prayer cannot change the Science of being, but it tends to bring us into harmony with it. ...Asking God to *be* God is a vain repetition. God is ‘the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever;’ and He who is immutably right will do right without being reminded of His province. ...Who would stand before a blackboard, and pray the principle of mathematics to solve the problem?<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 121.

<sup>353</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 2-3.

In summary, Eddy taught that matter should be opposed, because it functions in opposition to God's will. Despite the difficulty of our senses' agreement with matter, our prayer (and repentance) turns us to God's perspective, where the reflection of God becomes apparent and matter disappears.

Despite their different philosophical views of the substance of matter, the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* both oppose the moral implications of matter as a force in opposition to God, and they envision the escape from it through the awakening to God's realm where matter is either impotent or utterly unreal.

### Docetism Reconsidered

Discussion of the reality or meaning of matter raises one of the most serious theological questions regarding Christian belief and doctrine. If, as some Christians appear to argue, Jesus's body was not material, who or what was on the cross, and did Jesus even die on the cross? 'Docetism' (from the Greek *dokeō*, meaning 'to seem') is the doctrine that Jesus's body was not material, consisting of flesh and blood, but of a celestial substance; and therefore his suffering on the cross only *seemed* real. If it were true that Jesus never suffered as other humans experience suffering in their bodies, then the Christian claim of his salvific work would be meaningless.<sup>354</sup> Unfortunately, the history of heresiology complicates our modern attempt to understand the deeper, more nuanced meaning of some of the ancient texts, including *SRJ*. But I will argue that modern research has given us a wider view, prompting different questions, and resulting in challenges to the basic presumptions of docetic heresy.

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<sup>354</sup> See Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*, 126; King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 208-213; Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 68-69; Pheme Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism*, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 114.

*SRJ* is a good example. Even though no reference to Jesus's body occurs in the text, the mere association of *SRJ* with other ancient texts that question the meaning of matter relegates it to the category of 'Gnostic' heresy. Such oversimplified labeling has misled scholars to presume the author's belief in Docetism and has distracted readers from the essential argument of the text. Contrary to the popular belief in Docetic disdain for the body,<sup>355</sup> the *SRJ* text itself argues the exact opposite, that the body is *healed*. Rather than a *culprit* from which people must try to escape, the body is, in the *SRJ* author's view, the victim of the materialism that entraps the body. Presumptions of heresy mislead readers regarding the text's meaning of the nature of the body, and more importantly, the theological basis for Christian healing and salvation.<sup>356</sup>

The narrative in *SRJ* may also add to the confusion regarding the meaning of 'body,' when people seem at times fused with material identities and at other times free from them, or are created more than once. It is possible, however, that for the modern reader this uncertainty results partly from our anachronistic tendency to identify human life in antiquity in relation to our modern concepts of material bodies. Some of the people who inhabited God's realm *before* the fleshly body became animated were complete and reflected the infinitude of the Invisible Spirit: "...from the first Understanding and the perfect Mind, through God, through the approval of the great invisible Spirit and the approval of Autogenes, It named the true perfect Human, man, the primal revelation, Adam" (9:1-2).

Others, whose fleshliness caused them to forget their original identity as God's image and likeness, needed to repent of their ignorance; and when they did, they also reflected and glorified the Invisible Spirit:

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<sup>355</sup> The presumption of body hatred as a classic symptom of 'gnostic' categorisation is one of the clichés mentioned in Chapter One.

<sup>356</sup> Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 126. Quote from Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, transl. R. McL. Wilson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 157.

And the holy souls were set up. In the fourth Aeon were set up the souls of those who were ignorant of the Fullness and did not repent immediately but they persisted a while. And afterward they repented....These are the creatures who glorify the invisible Spirit (9:9-12, 14).

When human body parts became controlled by demons, subject to pain and suffering, people became subject to the deceit and cruel acts of the jealous god. A Saviour was needed to awaken them from demonic control.

In *SRJ* bodies were not objects to be loathed, but to be treated gently, as God sent messengers and helpers when the evil spirit attempted to harm them.<sup>357</sup> Indeed, a body cannot be the locus of evil, because it can be ‘neutralised’ – or, ‘healed’ of demonic influence.<sup>358</sup> While Docetism usually implies the spiritualising of Jesus’s body, the argument extends to all human bodies, claiming that bodies are either enemies or non-existent. But in *SRJ*, the body serves as a type of training ground for salvation before death, functioning as a battlefield for the opposing forces of Spirit and the counterfeit spirit.<sup>359</sup> It is the only tool or vehicle through which demons can attempt to manipulate humanity. Human beings thus *feel* transformation in body and soul:

And they will be purified in that place from all evil and the concerns of wickedness. ... For they are not restrained by anything except the reality of the flesh alone, which they bear while fervently awaiting the time when they will be visited by those who will receive (them) (6:6-10).

Although *SRJ* does not specify how long it will take individuals to accomplish this freedom – and indeed, it will involve a series of experiences in healing – it does claim that ultimately everyone will be successful except for those “to whom repentance did not come” (23:38).<sup>360</sup> Since *SRJ* concerns itself with present day

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<sup>357</sup> Also see Williams’s chapter six, “Hatred of the Body? or the Perfection of the Human?” in *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 116-138. He concludes that the ‘hatred of the body’ cliché “reveals very little and... conceals very much that might otherwise be understood about perceptions of body and soul...” (138).

<sup>358</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 123.

<sup>359</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 123-4.

<sup>360</sup> Although some scholars, such as Ramelli argue this caveat about excluding those who choose not to repent as evidence against apokatastasis (universal salvation), I will argue more fully in “*Universal Salvation*,” Chapter Six, why I think salvation is *available* to everyone in *SRJ*. See Ilaria

living, ‘awakening to one’s true nature’ is not a euphemistic description of dying; it is the joy and freedom to return to one’s origin in the immovable race.

In *SRJ* the ‘body,’ then, is neither non-existent nor evil, but better understood within the more fluid ancient pattern of microcosm within macrocosmic reality. The apparent variations between existence in and out of body, multiple creations, and lack of gender<sup>361</sup> distinction depict the fluctuations of influence between the Spirit and the counterfeit spirit. Reference to Jesus’s (or the Saviour’s) body illustrates this fluidity. In the prologue, a Pharisee named Arimanius questions John about Jesus’s whereabouts, and John replies that “He returned to the place from which he came” (2:3). John acknowledges that Jesus had told him and his fellow disciples that “the aeon to which we will go is modeled on the indestructible aeon, but he did not teach us about what sort the latter is” (2:12-13). John prays for understanding (2:4-11). Then the Saviour appears – in his vision – and spells out in detail the macrocosmic picture of God’s realm, which includes the immovable race. As the narrative develops, John learns why some appear to have taken on the flesh, and how they would ‘awaken’ to return to their root.

John’s response to Arimanius (the Pharisee questioning John) claims Jesus’s return to his origin, evoking the *Gospel of John*: “I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father” (*John* 16:28). Although *SRJ* never references Jesus’s crucifixion, there is no evidence to imply that Jesus’s body had been any different from that of his disciples or other human beings. But his resurrection, which is implied in *SRJ*, could have been seen as a victory over Satan, the great demon of all sin, torture,

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Ramelli, "Apokatastasis in Coptic Gnostic Texts from Nag Hammadi and Clement's and Origen's Apokatastasis: Toward an Assessment of the Origin of the Doctrine of Universal Restoration," *Journal of Coptic Studies*, 14, (2012): 37.

<sup>361</sup> In antiquity male and female ‘genders’ were conceived on a spectrum of greater or lesser spirituality, with male characteristics at the top of a hierarchical status.

and death. For this reason he would have known in this post-resurrection account of *SRJ* how to guide his disciples to their own return to the immovable race. “Now then,” he instructed John, “lift up your face so that you will receive the things that I will teach you today and you will tell them to your fellow spirits who come from the immovable generation of the perfect Human” (3:17-18).

Brakke agrees that the so-called ‘Gnostic savior’ was not docetic, but argues from a different approach that this Saviour is the same as the Saviour for other Christians.

...the Gnostic savior truly did become incarnate. Like other Christians, Gnostics lived in an in-between time: final salvation and revelation had come in Jesus, but the consummation of the end times that his arrival initiated had not yet come. The rulers were still in charge of this universe, and humans still needed to be *awakened* to their true nature and the reality of the spiritual realm (emphasis added).<sup>362</sup>

In such texts as *SRJ*, Brakke shows how the author seeks to emphasise the need to attain the proper *gnosis* or awakening to discover one’s true nature. The enemy, or evil spirit, still dominates human experience until the final salvation – or return to the divine realm – occurs. So the accusation of Docetism bypasses the salvific role of *gnosis* in its incorrect assessment of the nature of the Saviour’s body.

Eddy also conceived of ‘body’ in more fluid terms than Cartesian dichotomies imply. Causing neither suffering nor fulfillment, her concept of body serves, more like the *SRJ* body, as the important site of revelation. Jesus’s body, according to Eddy’s interpretation of Scriptural accounts, expresses the meaning of true being through his crucifixion and resurrection:

When Jesus spoke of reproducing his body, — knowing, as he did, that Mind was the builder, — and said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” they [the Jews who sought to kill him] thought that he meant their material temple instead of his body. ... This materialism lost sight of the true Jesus; but the faithful Mary saw him, and he presented to her, more than ever before, the true idea of Life and substance.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 69.

<sup>363</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 314.

His body was as real to his opponents as it was to ‘the faithful Mary’ before his crucifixion, but as Eddy argues, Mary (Magdalene) discerned his body both before and after the crucifixion, because she understood the spiritual meaning of his life.

Eddy did not view Mary’s spirituality as a form of esoteric knowledge, however. The practice of healing remained crucial to Eddy’s development of CS as the means for checking over-zealous spiritualising and theorising; healing was necessary for demonstrating the efficacy and essence of the knowledge (*gnosis*) of Christ. In her published ‘Correction,’ Eddy clarified the meaning and importance of ‘body’ in the human experience. Her students had asked why one would deny the existence of disease but not the body. She explained:

We deny *first* the existence of disease, because we can meet this negation more readily than we can negative [sic] all that the material senses affirm. ... Jesus of Nazareth.... came to the world not to destroy the law of being, but to fulfil it in righteousness. He restored the diseased body to its normal action, functions, and organization... . Neither the Old nor the New Testament furnishes reasons or examples for the destruction of the human body, but for its restoration to life and health as the scientific proof of “God with us.” ...The *spiritual* body, the incorporeal idea, came with the *ascension*.<sup>364</sup>

Simply put, we *need* the body while we methodically work through the false claims of the material (‘counterfeit’) senses. Eddy even goes so far as to claim that God loves the body and gives it the best care possible: “Immortal Mind [God] feeds the body with supernal freshness and fairness, supplying it with beautiful images of thought and destroying the woes of sense which each day brings to a nearer tomb.”<sup>365</sup> The ‘tomb’ for both *S&H* and *SRJ* does not represent contempt for the body, but rather a failure to overcome the passions or false sense and find the way back to the original divine realm.

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<sup>364</sup> Eddy, *Miscellany*, 217. This article was also referenced in Chapter Four, “Body in *SRJ* and *S&H*: Healing versus Dualism” to demonstrate Eddy’s opposition to dualism. The full article appears in Appendix 2 of this thesis.

<sup>365</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 248.



Docetism, defined as a doctrine that Jesus's body was not material, or a celestial substance, and thereby denying Jesus's fleshly crucifixion, therefore does not apply to either *SRJ* or *S&H*. Both authors strongly argue that human bodies must be healed/saved/corrected, rather than destroyed. This act of salvation is an important element of the concepts of healing in both texts, because the Saviour rescues those who suffer while *still in their bodies*.

## Healing as a Response to Evil

The conversation that follows between *SRJ* and *S&H* illustrates the wide range of application of their theories of evil. The first portion of the discussion concerns their urgent needs for solutions to the evil forces at work in society: political oppression and war. The second portion covers more intimate subjects that touched upon individuals' conscience and life purpose: martyrdom and marriage. Whether evil presented itself collectively or individually, both authors found healing – or resolution to the problems – through their views of the ultimate impotence of evil.

Second-century life in the Roman Empire appears almost incomparable to nineteenth-century life in the American Republic, but some aspects of their concerns for evil in the world drew on similar religious worldviews for solutions. Judging from the extent of *SRJ*'s interaction with Plato's *Timaeus*,<sup>366</sup> we can

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<sup>366</sup> The *Timaeus* serves as a valuable resource for understanding Roman attitudes toward society in *SRJ*, because much of the *SRJ* narrative parallels and responds to a similar creation narrative in *Timaeus*. In addition, Platonising philosophy continued to dominate political ideology into the second century. In his review of King's *Secret Revelation of John* (2006), Turner especially acknowledges her creativity in discerning the *SRJ* strategic use of *Timaeus* to demonise the "ignorant and malevolent bunglers who govern the world by the works of necessity and burden the immortal soul with senseless limitations and prohibitions, compulsive passions, and mortality itself." By King's analysis, the success of *SRJ* was due to the author's distinction between the creator and his ideal archetypal model, with a hierarchy extending from the divine archetype to the cruelty of the counterfeit creator. John D. Turner, "The secret revelation of John." *Vigiliae christianae* 63, no. 3, (2009), 317.

surmise that Roman society still depended on hierarchical order for personal, social, and cosmic health. Mid-nineteenth-century American society focused on recovery and rebuilding from its devastating Civil War. But both rejected earthly powers of oppression, and the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* sought the authority of a transcendent God to overrule abusive practices of their human rulers.

### Evil and Second-Century Society

Any power that would disrupt the proper order of hierarchy threatened peace in second-century society. Although *SRJ* defends hierarchical order, its rebuke of Roman rule exposed Rome's abuse of the true hierarchical order. *SRJ* begins with all authority vested in the Godhead and the divine realm. All was in perfect order, from the first aeon, who "exists prior to the All, for It is the head of all the aeons, and it gives them strength in Its goodness'" (5:4). Great tragedy struck when Sophia, one of the aeons already within the hierarchical structure, "willed a likeness to appear from within herself *without the will of the Spirit*. It had not approved" (10:2-3).

In this manner, Sophia rebelled against proper hierarchical authority. Her offspring Yaldabaoth, falsely claimed divine authority to create and govern the world. As a counterfeit Chief Ruler, authority was never truly granted to him, and he generated his own archons (rulers) in imitation of the divine realm. Greco-Roman readers would recognise how the powerful but deeply flawed *celestial* archons of *SRJ*'s Chief Ruler<sup>367</sup> were conceived as a critique on the *human* archons. In Greco-Roman society, secular 'middle-management' rulers, known as

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<sup>367</sup> Lewis's summary of scholarship on the archons of *SRJ* distinguishes two sets of seven archons which are found in other Nag Hammadi writings and on Roman tombstones and amulets. From one of the lists, scholars deduce there must be some connection between the planets and their identities, but the relationship is uncertain. It is possible that the names refer to the days of the week [in the same way our modern English days relate, with Sun-day, Mon (Moon)-day, and Sabbath (Saturday)]. Therefore, these lists may not imply "that the entire cosmos is saturated with demonic archons, but that time itself is ruled by archontic beings." Lewis, *Introduction to "Gnosticism,"* 158.

‘archons,’ served the emperor and ruled over the lives of their citizens. The greatest secular rulers, in hierarchical terms, were the Roman emperors, and from a Greco-Roman perspective, such rulers inhabited both earth and heaven.

*SRJ*’s remaining narrative consists of the cosmic battle between the original head of the cosmos, the Invisible Spirit, and the offspring of the chief demon, Yaldabaoth. The parallel between these arrogant gods and the gods on earth served as a masked critique on Roman rule, and as King argues, a risky one in light of Nero’s ruthless cruelty toward opposition.<sup>368</sup> In the context of this critique, the parallel between higher and lower powers teaches that the body politic as well as the human body serves as a battleground. All the lessons related to individual healing and salvation pertain to society and its political structures. As the body possesses no inherent capacity to cause health or disease, so the struggle for control of the body is the same struggle for every relational aspect of the cosmos.

*SRJ*’s account of Yaldabaoth’s rape of Eve,<sup>369</sup> depicting his intent to gain control over humanity, illustrates not only the social subjugation of woman to man, but also the political subjugation of humanity to Roman rulers, and the subjugation of human health to demonic powers. Yaldabaoth’s attempted subjugation is a mockery of hierarchical law, where all authority rests in the one Godhead and the saviours bring freedom from oppression. Lillie’s recent study of the founding narratives and myths of Rome in correlation with three stories of the rape of Eve written in the same period (including *SRJ*) reinforces the authority of *SRJ*’s protesting voice against forces of subjugation.

Lillie contends that these narratives, including conquest and rape, “form a part of Rome’s justification for the hierarchical and gendered dynamics on which

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<sup>368</sup> See King’s interpretation of the social critique in chapter “Utopian Desire, Social Critique, and Resistance,” *Secret Revelation of John*, 157-173.

<sup>369</sup> The narrative account of Eve’s rape occurs in the third portion of *SRJ* (described in Chapter Six), powerfully demonstrating the author’s views on salvation. But it also represents an understanding of evil in a second-century social context, so I use the example of the rape of Eve here somewhat outside the thematic order of the text itself.

society is predicated.”<sup>370</sup> Through her recounting of the Romans’ seizure and forced marriage of the Sabine women, Lillie shows how Rome’s victims were humiliated and ultimately forced (through rape) to become participants in the Roman imperial order.<sup>371</sup> Roman conquest and subjugation over its vast empire was self-justified by its assertion of divine favour; and their self-authorisation was secured by the fact that their gods became human through their actions and some particular humans could become gods.

Crossan’s identification of socio-political dimensions in earlier New Testament healing stories demonstrates the usefulness of such story-telling in the second century. Symbolism in the account of Jesus’s healing the Gerasene demoniac would have sounded like “every Jewish revolutionary’s dream!”<sup>372</sup> The demon is named ‘Legion’ – the sign of Roman power; it is consigned to swine – a symbol of deep revulsion. So again, the divine healing power of Christ is portrayed as the victor over the subjugation of Roman rule. The emperor’s dual human and divine natures supported his claim to the pinnacle of the hierarchical order, and all things that exist – the physical world, animals, humans, and gods – were subject to the eternal laws of this imperial nature.<sup>373</sup> Therefore, the slightest criticism of an emperor was sufficient cause for a death sentence. But the *SRJ* critique was based on a different relationship between human and divine, and it demonstrated its message through a parallel use of hierarchical law in human and divine contexts.

On the other hand, Lillie argues that the framing of a text such as *SRJ* “is an explicit and overt critique of the Roman empire and emperors rather than a

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<sup>370</sup> Celene Lillie, “The Rulers’ Rape of Eve: Sexual Violence and Subjugation, Transformation and Resistance in Roman History, Myth, and Three Retellings of Genesis 1-6” (Diss. for Union Theological Seminary, 2015), 5.

<sup>371</sup> Lillie, “Rulers’ Rape of Eve,” 17.

<sup>372</sup> John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: the Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 314-5.

<sup>373</sup> Robert Louis Wilken, *As the Romans Saw Them*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 91.

veiled one.”<sup>374</sup> *SRJ*’s rulers of the world are characterised as ignorant, unjust and violent, and the Roman rulers used violence, intimidation and displacement to maintain peace. Whether overt or covert, the only means for the counterfeit Yaldabaoth to exercise power is to subjugate, and his jealousy of the authentic divine power drives him to use his powers for the purpose of destructive oppression.

Under Yaldabaoth’s rule, Eve was raped, humanity fell under the spell of foreign rule, and humans became subject to all forms of suffering and sin. The longer version of *SRJ* specifically takes a strong condemnatory position against oppression of any kind, including the subordination of woman. Yaldabaoth finds the female (Eve) preparing herself for her male (Adam), and he (Yaldabaoth) reveals his ignorance concerning the mystery of the holy design.<sup>375</sup> She had been sent as Eve (called Life) in the Hebrew Bible to be a helper for Adam. But in contrast to *Genesis*, Adam of *SRJ* endures the loss of his own bodily integrity not through eating forbidden fruit, but through extraction of his ‘enlightened Insight,’ an aspect of his original being. Adam is rescued by Eve, however, as he recognises the essence of his own being (the enlightened Insight) in the woman beside him. He and Eve depart together, making clear that male domination is not part of the divine plan.<sup>376</sup> Eve is thus a saviour, not a victim.

Rulers of bodies in *SRJ* are the same as rulers of social and political systems; they claim divine authority to rule in the human sphere. Evil demon-guided forces, such as Yaldabaoth and his minions attempt to control humanity, by making them sick or sinful. Yaldabaoth’s purpose in raping Eve is to instill the sin of lust within her, and his purpose in making Adam forget his roots is to keep

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<sup>374</sup> Lillie, “Rulers’ Rape of Eve,” 259.

<sup>375</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 255.

<sup>376</sup> See Lillie’s fuller interpretation of these texts for greater clarification of the roles of Eve, Adam, and the counterfeit, Chief Ruler. “Rulers’ Rape of Eve,” 185-197.

his soul and body in bondage. Yaldabaoth, an enemy opposing the higher God, is characterised as an arrogant, unjust, hideous, and malicious ruler-god who, in his madness and ignorance, claimed to hold supreme authority over humanity. Evil is thus portrayed, not as an enemy force with inherent power, but as *overturned* hierarchy. *SRJ*'s saviours uphold the proper order of power and authority of the divine creation, which ultimately overcomes the disruption of the lower powers' faulty claims to divine sources.

The author of *SRJ* called on Christ to save the entire hierarchical system of life from the cruelty of fraudulent rulers or demons, by reinstating the true and just supreme power. Still upholding faith in hierarchical law of the cosmos, *SRJ* boldly implies that the Roman elite was to blame for their power-hungry and malicious practices of domination. Claiming authority from their gods, they wrongly commanded respect and worship above the Christian God whose authority and goodness was impeccable and beyond human reach. *SRJ* proclaims, "It is the invisible Spirit, and It is not appropriate to consider It to be like the gods or that it is something similar. For it is more than divine, without anything existing over It. For nothing lords over It" (4:5-6).

### Evil and Nineteenth-Century Society

In a different context, Eddy also supports the notion of divine hierarchy and its harmonious government of humanity. She wrote in *S&H*:

God gives the lesser idea of Himself for a link to the greater, and in return, the higher always protects the lower. The rich in spirit help the poor in one grand brotherhood, all having the same Principle, or Father; and blessed is that man who seeth his brother's need and supplieth it, seeking his own in another's good.<sup>377</sup>

The new American Republic had just begun to recover from the horrific suffering of its Civil War (1861-1865), when Eddy penned these promising words of God's

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<sup>377</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 518.

benevolent hierarchical control. As a radical departure from years of public sermons and pamphlets preaching that war came from God as punishment for the sins of the people, her message of divine order offered a new perspective on God's 'lesser ideas.' From a 1978 survey of hundreds of these post-war sermons, Moorehead concluded that the nation believing itself destined to lead the world to millennial splendour had succumbed to internecine strife, and that clergy had preached that its failure "is surely one of the most lamentable, and one of the most inexplicable providences in the history of nations or of mankind."<sup>378</sup>

The whole country had sinned "while holding in trust the noblest heritage ever held by any people, while having charge in effect of the last and most precious hopes of human nature," as Byron Sunderland charged his Washington, D.C. congregation. And without God's mercy, the country would surely "sink into an abyss of shame and infamy such as no people ever contracted, not even the doomed and wandering house of Israel."<sup>379</sup>

Through her own trials and prayers through the war, Eddy concluded that the evil erupting in fratricidal violence was neither God-ordained nor God-empowered, and humans should understand their freedom from a supposed kingdom of evil. She acknowledged the extent of human suffering, but envisaged the nature of evil and the solution to it differently from the preachers of her day: "Mankind must learn that evil is not power. Its so-called despotism is but a phase of nothingness. Christian Science despoils the kingdom of evil, and pre-eminently promotes affection and virtue in families and therefore in the community."<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> James Moorehead, "The Armageddon of the Republic," chap. 2 in *American Apocalypse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 42-29. Essay copied as "Civil War as Battle of Armageddon," in Patrick Allitt, "War, Defeat, and Apocalyptic Religion: 1860-1890," in *Major Problems in American Religious History*, ed. Patrick Allitt (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company), 2000, 214.

<sup>379</sup> Moorehead, "Civil War as Battle of Armageddon," 215.

<sup>380</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 102.

Her opposition to the power of evil was not naïve self-delusion, as she herself had struggled with poverty, poor health, and near invalidism, as well as the emotional, financial, and social instability that took its toll on everyone after the war. In her personal darkest hour, at age 45, and only seven months after the war ended, she came close to death when she sustained severe internal injuries falling on an icy sidewalk. While reading her Bible, she experienced a sudden recovery, and from that time forward, she devoted her life to her discovery of the ‘Science’ of Christ she found in the Bible. It was a Science that was to heal the sick, transform sinners, and resolve social evils.

Eddy’s devotion to defending “affection and virtue in families and therefore in the community,”<sup>381</sup> healing broken hearts, broken bodies, and broken society, ultimately challenged her fellow Christians to have *more* faith in the goodness of God. They needed more faith in Spirit than matter (to guide, comfort, heal, and save), and therefore not to blame God for the suffering. Eddy rebelled against the notion of a wrathful God as preached in most churches of her day, and against the general Christian complacency toward God’s inability to help sufferers.

Despite her white privilege and social proximity to white preachers, Eddy’s devotion to freedom from the enslavement of all forms of evil resonated with the liberation of slaves part way through the Civil War. All the systems of human rulers (in America) were implicated in the causes of suffering, since God is the rightful hierarchical Ruler, and all society needed deliverance from such oppression. Newly emancipated men and women proclaimed President Lincoln as the Great Liberator, a second Moses leading the children of Israel out of bondage.<sup>382</sup> Eddy saw God as the liberator for *all* humanity:

The voice of God in behalf of the African slave was still echoing in our land, when the voice of the herald of this new crusade sounded the keynote

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<sup>381</sup> Quote from previous footnote.

<sup>382</sup> Patrick Allitt, “War, Defeat, and Apocalyptic Religion: 1860-1890,” *Major Problems in American Religious History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 196.



of universal freedom, asking a fuller acknowledgment of the rights of man as a Son of God, demanding that the fetters of sin, sickness, and death be stricken from the human mind and that its freedom be won, not through human warfare, not with bayonet and blood, but through Christ's divine Science.<sup>383</sup>

By the end of the war, most other preachers had turned from Reverend Clarke's plea that the people of God "have only to keep their Christian virtues, and exercise them, and by this simple process they shall at length acquire a Kingdom."<sup>384</sup> Eddy agreed with his claim that the people of God have "no license for invasion," but she diverged from most of her religious contemporaries over Christian obligation to the world. Without a faithful commitment to God's absolute supremacy and goodness, the nation could again fall into the sins of self-righteous blindness, taking away the ruling power from God.

Supremacy is a hierarchical concept, where, in Eddy's view, God maintains benevolent rule over the world, and humans are subservient to God's law and order. She disagreed with second- and nineteenth-century slavery, because slaves were to be free from the false hierarchy of humans placing themselves (and self-righteous belief in their own power) above God. But they as all others, are obedient to the divine Mind/God. Eddy conceives this manumission for humanity as freedom from all forms of oppression – from sin and disease, as well as social, economic, and political powers.

### Healing as Alternative to Martyrdom

In this second portion of the conversation on theoretical application, the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* address the troubling issues of the day that touched people in a deep and personal way. Analogous perhaps to political views of abortion in the late twentieth-century United States, martyrdom was a second-

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<sup>383</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 226. The phrase 'Christ's divine Science' refers to the universality of science, or the continuity of Christ's blessings for all humanity.

<sup>384</sup> Moorehead, "Civil War as Battle of Armageddon," 214.

century litmus test of politico-religious identity among Christians. It was a subject of intense debate in antiquity, because its threat was real to Christians who resisted loyalty to Roman authorities. The debate among Christians touched on the meaning of health and the means of obtaining it, the relationship to God (or gods), salvation, and speculation on the after-life. But its lasting impact was the wedge it drove between competing Christianities.

People understood health and its relationship to God (or gods) in numerous ways. Martyrdom itself is not specifically addressed in *SRJ*, but *SRJ*'s emphasis on healing, saving, and caring represents an alternative to martyrdom. Its argument offered a radically different type of care for the soul from fellow Christians who more often aligned themselves with the prevalent views of Stoic extirpation of passions.

Saxon argues that French philosopher Foucault has convincingly rejected the widely held belief that Greco-Roman philosophies pursued abstract knowledge rather than concern for the care of the soul/self, or *epimeleia heautou*. Their concern for care and healing overrode any willingness to sacrifice one's body. However, Stoic attitudes were useful in numerous settings and adaptable for Christians, especially their ideal views on passions, *apatheia* (without 'passion'). Stoics were in effect materialists who rejected the immaterial soul, but as Saxon found, the Christian "process of embracing martyrdom [was] represented in terms of 'patient endurance,' a term consonant with the idea of self-control whatever the circumstances, even in anticipating a painful death which ultimately brings freedom."<sup>385</sup> Contrary to the emphasis on caring for the body, these Christian ideals could have inspired some to *seek* martyrdom as the ultimate test of their ability to control emotions.

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<sup>385</sup> Saxon, "Care of the Soul," 26. In the attempt to study martyrdom in antiquity, Saxon warns in footnote #22 that "A key debate concerns to what extent early Christians even actually sought martyrdom. Lack of hard, factual evidence regarding the extent of and degree of persecution makes studying Christian martyrdom in the first centuries of the Common Era problematic."

A variety of positive attitudes appear among the pro-martyrdom Christians, ranging from martyrdom as sacrifice, to martyrdom as a victory over Satan (a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement),<sup>386</sup> and to martyrdom as a model of virtue. The intermingling of various attitudes toward martyrdom leads to one common conclusion – that suffering is good:

Through attachment to the death of Jesus, suffering and death become inherently ‘good,’ even becoming a form of ‘salvation.’ ... What is striking about this statement is that imitating the Jesus model entails only suffering and death, not a set of moral values. Strange and alien though this concept is to modern ears, at its core the model exemplified in Christ encouraged one thing: suffering.<sup>387</sup>

Perkins persuasively supports this image of the suffering culture among many Christians, arguing that power in this culture lies in the ubiquitous narratives of a community of sufferers who represented a realistic situation that also provided “a self-definition that enabled the growth of Christianity as an institution.”<sup>388</sup> These believers held that suffering achieved several goals for the Christian. Martyrdom gave hope to those who attempted to model Jesus and his suffering. It granted those who achieved the ultimate suffering in martyrdom a rare promise of salvation. Furthermore, Tertullian warned that at death, almost all souls will be taken to hell when they separate from the body. Only those who become martyrs, purified from their sins, could escape punishment in Hades.<sup>389</sup>

*SRJ* is unambiguous about its commitment to the care of the soul *and* body. The detailed account of Human creation in *SRJ* begins with the ‘powers’

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<sup>386</sup> Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), ix.

<sup>387</sup> Candida Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 105.

<sup>388</sup> Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era*. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 12. Saxon explains in ‘*Care of the Soul*,’ 203, footnote #84, that although in this text Perkins does not refer to one particular group of Christians, she stated that she was talking about one kind of Christianity when discussing “Imperial Time Frames” (her paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, 19 November 2011). She also acknowledged many other kinds of Christians.

<sup>389</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 143.

that connected bodily expression of the soul. “And the powers began (their work): The first one, Goodness, created a bone-soul. The second one, Pronoia, created a sinew-soul,” and so forth (15:21-22). And the ideological position of *SRJ* is the *present* help of the Saviour, in contrast to the martyr’s reward after death. From her study of specific texts in the debate over martyrdom,<sup>390</sup> Saxon summarises the view of those who saw the joyful release from passions as fraudulent:

It is not esoteric knowledge that the Christian needs but rather the ability to live in a manner free from entanglement in harmful desires. Those who seek martyrdom are not living in this way as they associate salvation with a carnal resurrection of a material body that is enslaved to the passions.<sup>391</sup>

Another second-century Alexandrian teacher, Basilides, “provides clear disruptions to the discourse of martyrdom as a sacrifice willed by and pleasing to a God who must be appeased through a substitutionary blood sacrifice along with the accompanying theology of the resurrection of the flesh.”<sup>392</sup> From these Christians’ viewpoint, the disputes over martyrdom turned on the understanding of God’s presence and notion of goodness. Those who seek suffering as a means to escape from Hades appealed to God’s goodness after death, whereas those who opposed martyrdom argued for God’s ability to save from passions (sin, disease) before death. Basilides clings to the goodness of Providence, despite the terrible physical suffering of persecution, asserting that “I will say anything rather than call Providence evil” (4.82.2).<sup>393</sup> Saxon interprets, “In other words, if God is good, it cannot be *necessary* for Christ or Christians to suffer to appease God, but their doing so may indeed be the means of their spiritual development or benefit.”<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> The specific texts Saxon uses for her analysis of the second century ‘care of the soul’ are: *1 Clement*, *Letters of Ignatius*, *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians*, *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, *Apocalypse of Peter*, *Testimony of Truth*, *Fragments of Basilides and Valentinus*, *Gospel of Judas*, *Gospel of Mary*, and the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*.

<sup>391</sup> Saxon, “Care of the Soul,” 86.

<sup>392</sup> Saxon, “Care of the Soul,” 89.

<sup>393</sup> Bentley Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*. (New York: Doubleday, 1987,) 442. ‘Providence’ is generally taken to mean God or nature’s protective care.

<sup>394</sup> Saxon, “Care of the Soul,” 89.

Martyrdom was a complex concern, and could not be reduced to a simple solution.

Therefore, *SRJ* seems to provide further evidence that martyrdom drove a wedge between Christian ideologies. The worldview of those in favour of martyrdom appeared to be consistent with the Greco-Roman tendency toward Stoic care of the soul; whereas *SRJ*'s worldview is more complicated because it agrees with the Stoic philosophy of extirpating the passions,<sup>395</sup> but does not agree with the Stoic lack of a Saviour to restore the harmony of life and health. The wedge between *SRJ* and the martyr-embracing Christians is the *SRJ* rejection of death as a reward and acceptance of a Saviour who overpowers passions, sickness, and death.

Debates over martyrdom were understandably fierce, and throughout history scholars positioned them as arguments over 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy,' rather than proper care of the soul. Not until recently, when *SRJ* could finally be read and interpreted independently of its opponents, could its message of hope stand as an alternative to martyrdom. Now its message is clear: Christ offers care of the soul *and* body *before* death for those who respond to the call to awaken.

### Healing as Alternative to Free-love

Mary Baker Eddy's theology also spoke directly to the evils of her day, but the nineteenth-century American battle was fought on an entirely different socio-political issue than the second century focus on martyrdom. The topic of marriage sparked controversy in political and legal arenas related to new forms of Christianity, the suffragist struggles, and relations between men and women. For

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<sup>395</sup> Nussbaum claims that the Stoics' cure for passions requires a complete extirpation of them (p. 138), but she also argues that this freedom from passion is not a means to happiness (p. 173). Detachment from the senses is understood as a virtue, but health is merely a by-product, not a goal (p. 132), Nussbaum, "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 129-77.

Eddy, the morality of marriage was requisite for success in healing without medicine. The placement of the chapter on 'Marriage' in *S&H* behind only 'Prayer' and 'Atonement and Eucharist' signalled the importance of moral strength as necessary for human survival, and as the source of spiritual strength with which her readers should expect to heal others. For Eddy, success in healing was dependent upon moral purity: "In order to cure his patient, the metaphysician must first cast moral evils out of himself and thus attain the spiritual freedom which will enable him to cast physical evils out of his patient;..."<sup>396</sup> Moral rules were clear to Eddy, but the ambiguity of morality in marriage that stemmed from the Protestant Reformation era erupted into warfare again as she was writing her textbook on healing, *S&H*.

When the American Revolutionary War gave birth to the new nation in 1776, a great majority of American citizens shared the religious culture of Protestant Christianity, known as Puritanism. Eddy's religious roots, firmly planted in Puritan morals and traditions, remained the source of her moral guidance for the rest of her life. But when she approached adulthood, Puritan idealism faced serious opposition from a different kind of Protestant Christianity. The new Revival Christianity, sweeping through and transforming the American religious landscape, readily embraced the American 'free-love' movement which challenged the venerable institution of marriage so cherished in Puritan tradition. Its call to awaken from the enslavement of marriage painted both legal marriage and college-educated Puritans as old-fashioned sources of superstition and oppression for women in particular. It spawned new religious movements supporting health, wholeness, and quasi-religious medical experiments.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 366.

<sup>397</sup> Peter Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 230-234.

Victoria Woodhull, a leading voice in the free-love movement, carried the banner of American philosopher Henry David Thoreau that “love should be as free as is the eagle’s wing.”<sup>398</sup> Her promise that the abolition of marriage would enable a more glorified womanhood and provide the gateway to a paradise caught the imagination of revivalists. Her vision led the way to paradise regained:

I believe that in order to prepare minds to contemplate and desire and enact the new and better, it is necessary that the old and still prevalent superstitious veneration for the legal marriage tie be relaxed and weakened; *not to pander to immorality*, but as an introductory to a nobler womanhood and a more glorified womanhood; as indeed, the veritable gateway to *a paradise regained* (emphasis added).<sup>399</sup>

Influenced by her parents’ questionable model<sup>400</sup> and her own marriage to an alcoholic when she was fifteen years of age, Woodhull declared war on the institution of marriage. Raging against her experience with its immorality and seeking to expose the hypocrisy of legally protected sins in marriage, she argued that marriage accommodated hypocrisy, deprived women of their rights as human beings, and prevented the natural course of real love.

Eddy’s marriage experience (twice widowed, and once divorced) was no example of utopia. But she ‘crossed swords’ with free-love. Her parent’s Puritan example<sup>401</sup> and steady stream of biblical training armed her to fight this foe on multiple fronts. In an article entitled ‘Wedlock’ published in 1889, she wrote:

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<sup>398</sup> These words are the beginning of Thoreau’s poem, ‘Free Love’ (1842), which later became the name of the social movement dedicated to the abolition of marriage. See further details: Cindy Peyser Safronoff, *Crossing Swords: Mary Baker Eddy vs Victoria Woodhull and the Battle for the Soul of Marriage* (Seattle: This One Thing, 2015), 38.

<sup>399</sup> Victoria C. Woodhull, “The Principles of Social Freedom” (New York: Woodhull & Claflin, 1871) Reprint in Madeline Stern, ed., *The Victoria Woodhull Reader* (Weston, MA: M&S Press, 1974), as quoted in Safronoff, *Crossing Swords*, 37.

<sup>400</sup> Woodhull’s father, Buck Reuben Buckman (‘Buck’) turned to theft, counterfeiting, blackmail, and fraud. As an alcoholic, he beat his children severely. Her mother, Roxanna Hummel (‘Annie’) was likely born of an unwed mother with no legal rights or inheritance. She had no schooling, but was highly influenced by a student of Anton Mesmer who cured with therapeutic magnets. After losing two of her ten children to illness, Annie began treating her children with animal magnetism, and her daughters followed her approach to spirituality and healing. Safronoff, *Crossing Swords*, 90-92.

<sup>401</sup> Her parents upheld the ideal Puritan example for their family through both the love from her mother and stern rules from her father. Her father performed the role of the Puritan head of household with daily Bible lessons and farm chores for everyone. Eddy remembered her father’s

It was about the year 1875 that Science and Health first crossed swords with free-love, and the latter fell *hors de combat*; but the whole warfare of sensuality was not then ended. Science and Health, the book that cast the first stone, is still at work, deep down in human consciousness, laying the axe at the root of error.<sup>402</sup>

Just as her opponent did, Eddy argued on the side of moral indignation: “To an ill-attuned ear, discord is harmony; so personal sense, discerning not the legitimate affection of Soul, may place love on a false basis and thereby lose it.”<sup>403</sup> But from a human standpoint, she continued, people will always need to choose between the lesser of evils. In the “marriage contract two are made one, and, according to the divine precept, ‘they twain shall be one flesh.’ Oneness in spirit is Science, compatible with home and heaven. Neither divine justice nor human equity has *divorced* two minds in one.”<sup>404</sup>

Eddy’s overriding concern was the calling of Christ to heal, not only as a humanitarian imperative, but as God’s means of communicating God’s relationship to creation. Sensuously impelled, self-guided sexual relations were the ‘jest of sin’ and presented the epitome of the opposition to God’s goodness. Due to the ‘open-mindedness’ of free-love participants, particularly the Spiritualists’ blending of non-medical healing, immorality, and material-based thinking, Eddy was drawn involuntarily into the crossfire. Lacking a Christian orientation or systematic approach to healing for themselves, many Spiritualists were drawn to CS. But in Eddy’s view, their loose morals – a ‘crime against public morals and decency’<sup>405</sup> – caused serious obstruction to their success in healing. To Richard Kennedy, one of her earliest students, she warned that the world offered many

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‘iron will’ and ‘tight harness’ (31), and she considered her mother’s way of living and relationship with her children and husband a legacy that she revered but was unable to emulate (27). Gill, *Mary Baker Eddy*.

<sup>402</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, “Wedlock,” *The Christian Science Journal*, Vol. 7, June 1889, 109.

<sup>403</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 287.

<sup>404</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 289.

<sup>405</sup> See Safronoff, *Crossing Swords*, 260, footnote #272; William N. Eskridge, Jr., *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003* (New York: Viking, 2008), 21.



alluring temptations that he did not yet understand. “If you follow me you must cross swords with the world. Are you spiritually-minded enough to take up my work and stand by it?”<sup>406</sup>

The contrast between Eddy’s and Woodhull’s understanding of morals presents a striking example of competing views of the nineteenth century. Sharing a Protestant heritage, they agreed that God’s goodness provided a loving means for human support and procreation, though they disagreed on the means of support. ‘Man should not be alone,’ though the legal meaning of ‘being together’ was a matter of dispute. They agreed on God’s goodness, but not on the origin of love. For Eddy, human love reflects God’s love for us, but for Woodhull, love originates in the human mind and body.<sup>407</sup>

Eddy’s crossing swords with free-love resonates with *SRJ*’s defence of God’s goodness and vigorous opposition to evil’s influence on human beings. Although the moral issues raised in the human practice of martyrdom and the institution of marriage were both seriously challenged by competing religious perspectives, the authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* saw God’s goodness as a source of human morals. For Eddy, destroying immorality was required for the defence of healing, and for both authors, morality did not serve as a means to an end. The evil of martyrdom and free-love (with its association with Spiritualism and materially based connection to God and healing) was their obstruction to God’s will and power to heal and save humanity.

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<sup>406</sup> Yvonne Caché von Fettweis and Robert Townsend Warneck, *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer (Amplified Version)* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 2009), 85.

<sup>407</sup> In the end, Woodhull was widowed and divorced, unsatisfied with all three marriages. She ultimately denounced free-love and tried to re-make herself as a proper lady, abandoning her affiliation with Spiritualism and free-love, but with the assistance of forged documents. Safronoff, *Crossing Swords*, 227. Two of Eddy’s three marriages met her expectations, but even in the second long marriage to an unfaithful husband, she never wavered in her defence of the legal provisions of marriage as a moral commitment to God. Free-love and Spiritualism were ultimately disavowed, but Eddy warned: “In the present or future, some extra throe of error may conjure up a new-style conjugality, which, *ad libitum*, severs the marriage covenant, puts virtue in the shambles, and coolly notifies the public of broken vows.” Eddy, “*Wedlock*,” 109.

## Observations from the Conversation on Theme Two

The authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* both address the problems of evil in life experience with realism. Whatever biographical information about the author of *SRJ* might have been available in antiquity has now disappeared, but his discussion of passions, demons, sin, and salvation indicates a vivid awareness of troubling powers of his day. Eddy's biographers add considerable evidence of her knowledge of suffering and experience of evil to her own descriptions of it in her published writings. Due to their mutual knowledge of demons and/or animal magnetism and human suffering, the authors of both texts accentuate themes related to the denunciation of the power of evil. But both authors conclude in their own way that evil has no inherent power to destroy God's realm. And the Saviour sent by God is able to overcome every emotional, painful, sinful attack from evil, including death itself on the basis of the falsity of its claims to power and true existence.

The two most glaring differences between the texts are their linguistic expressions of evil and the social contexts in which evil is experienced. The terms 'animal magnetism' and 'mesmerism' were unknown in the second century, and the names of second century demons were largely unknown in the nineteenth century. To my knowledge, the names of Yaldabaoth and other demons have no correlation of evil beyond their use in other ancient literature, and although I am conversant with Eddy's use of the term 'animal magnetism,' I am conscious that it is nearly as foreign as 'archons' for the general public. Both terms have fallen out of use today.

Eddy uses the generic term 'demon' occasionally, and when she does, it is treated almost synonymously with her other terms for evil, as in this example: "...and all the wicked endeavours of suppositional demons can never change

the current of that life [referring to Christ] from steadfastly flowing on to God, its divine source.”<sup>408</sup> Whether demonic influence caused personal sins and diseases or the troubles of the Roman Empire rule or the American Civil War, both authors denounced such evils as unjust, blasphemous, and most of all – impotent.

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<sup>408</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 19.

## Chapter Six: Theme Three – The Correlation of Healing and Salvation

Theme three, the correlation of healing and salvation, is a culmination of the relationship between themes one and two. The previous two themes in this thesis laid the foundation for understanding salvation in both authors, which in turn explains why healing is an integral aspect of salvation. The healing characteristics of God (theme one) overrule any supposed power in evil, regardless of its destructive tactics (theme two). Therefore, suffering humans are saved *from* the counterfeit forces of evil through the work of Christ, who awakens humans *to* the reality of God's love (theme three). Since evil attacks health, morals, and life itself, the Saviour rescues those who suffer from any form of disease, sin, and mortality. Salvation, then, is understood in these theological treatises as the work of God that heals bodies, saves sinners from the pain of their own beliefs, and awakens God's children to the permanent security of dwelling safely with God.

As noted earlier, the dissimilar contexts in which these authors developed their views would seem unlikely breeding grounds for similar conclusions. Their different languages, geographic and historic locations, social structures, economic and political systems, theological, scientific and medical milieus, and cosmic philosophies all contributed to their understanding of the relevance of their theological works.

In this chapter, following the interpretive narrative of the final portion of *SRJ*, I will explain some history of Christian attitudes toward healing and its relation to salvation, especially in the second and nineteenth centuries. Then through conversation between *SRJ* and *S&H*, I will discuss their contributions to the meaning and importance of salvation, followed by the theological and

practical issues related to healing in the context of salvation. I will conclude with some observations regarding the readers – or patients – who might be seeking healing from these texts and how their healing corresponds with salvation.

### Interpretation of *SRJ* Narrative, Theme Three

The scene for the cosmic battle is set in paradise (an ironic place for a cosmic battle), and the issue at stake is the control of the mind of humankind. Yaldabaoth and his rulers, now fully committed to destroying humanity, take Adam to paradise and tell him to eat (20:1,2) of the tree of life, with leaves of deception and hatred in its shade. But the tree of knowledge of good and evil (or Epinoia, enlightened Insight in the form of a tree) is also present in paradise (20:18). Fearing that this tree might inspire Adam to look up, the rulers try to block his view where he will discern the truth of his fullness (20:21). Adam disobeys them, and indeed the Saviour (Jesus<sup>409</sup>) causes him (Adam) to eat from the tree of right knowledge. Yaldabaoth is provoked, however, and puts him in a trance, as *SRJ* quotes from prophetic vision:<sup>410</sup> “I shall make their minds sluggish, that they may neither understand nor discern” (21:1-7).

Epinoia (enlightened Insight) then hides more deeply within, where Yaldabaoth, cannot grasp her, thereby preventing him from creating a woman. He then creates a moulded (physical) form of a woman’s *shape* (Eve), by seizing some of Adam’s power, according to the (mental) image of Epinoia who had appeared to him (21:8-17). But Adam – part material, part psyche, and part spiritual – discerns Epinoia as the woman before him, and he awakens from his dark drunken state. It is Sophia (true wisdom) who descends to provide the perfect

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<sup>409</sup> Jesus appears sporadically throughout the text as one of the forms of the Saviour.

<sup>410</sup> *Isa 6:10* “Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.”

knowledge (21:25); she is now the mother of all the living (21:23,24), as her deficiencies are corrected. Jesus, the Saviour, provides the light of insight to awaken from the darkness (21:30), and Adam is now able to discern his likeness in the woman, discovering in her his proper counterpart (21:18-19).

Each time Yaldabaoth is provoked, he strives to destroy humanity with every physical tool available to him; the harmonious functioning of the divine realm reveals itself through its response. Adam and Eve unite in sharing the light of Epinoia, provoking Yaldabaoth yet again, so he responds by raping Eve in order to implant sexual desire and gain control over humanity. But the divine Forethought anticipated the rape, sending emissaries to rescue *Zoe* (Life) out of Eve. Even after Eve gave birth to two sons, however, Yaldabaoth could not hold humanity in sin (sexual desire). Adam's recognition of his spiritual essence begot Seth\* in the likeness of the divine Human, and no violence or misogyny could destroy Eve's essential nature.

The work of the Saviour so thoroughly overcame the actions of the Chief Ruler, that the proper understanding of sex in this scene is not a sentence to Yaldabaoth's tomb but rather a means of salvation *from* sin and suffering.<sup>411</sup> The Chief Ruler's last effort was an attempt to force Seth's descendants to drink the water of forgetfulness in order to forget their origins in the divine Realm (once again). But they remained ready for the divine Spirit to raise them up and *heal them* of any deficiency.<sup>412</sup> The term 'healing' means correcting anything that was unlike the original perfection, whether it was of a sinful or hurtful nature.

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<sup>411</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 129. King's interpretation of this text is one of her most remarkable contributions. She claims two surprising ideas: (1) "that proper human sexual reproduction is modeled on divine creativity," and (2) "that the recognition of the divine essence in one another is spiritually life-producing." From these conclusions she affirms, "Indeed it is an act of salvation."

<sup>412</sup> The Berlin Codex version is usually translated, "will *set right* the deficiency" (22:36). Lewis explains: "...just as Pronoia's descent into the cosmos disrupts and 'sets right' the demonic order of the macrocosm, her descent into the human body of the redeemed disrupts then 'sets right' the demonically-ordered microcosm of the body." Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism: Under Pitiless Skies*, 131.

Although the story of the divine creation, the counterfeit creation, and salvation from the counterfeit concludes here, the narrative continues with three additional lessons on the meaning of salvation. First, the Saviour\* answers questions about the circumstances in which people will be saved or not saved. Second, Yaldabaoth and his demons try three more times to destroy humanity. And third, Pronoia\* descends three times into the darkest, deepest part of the underworld to awaken those who had fallen asleep (died). She guides the soul out of the depths and seals the baptism with five seals. The six questions John asks the Lord about salvation are:

- (1) Will all the souls be delivered into the pure light? (23:1)
- (2) Will the souls of those upon whom the power of the Spirit of Lie descended but who did not do these works be excluded? (23:13)
- (3) When the souls of those leave their flesh, where will they go? (23:19)  
[possible paraphrase: "Where will those who leave their flesh go?"]
- (4) Where will the souls be who do not know to whom their souls belong? (23:25)
- (5) How does the soul become smaller and return back into the nature of its mother or the human? (23:32)
- (6) What about those who understood and yet turned away? Where will their souls go? (23:37)

From his answers to the questions about salvation, the Saviour underscores the importance of understanding the *process* of salvation as a gradual one. First, an individual recognises salvation, not as a reward for good behaviour, but freedom from enslaving passions. The agitation of any kind of demon must be destroyed in order to live among the immovable generation (those who 'do not waver,' even on earth), and the victory over sin and sickness is evidence of dominion over the demons. The second question concerns those who do not find that freedom, and the Saviour explains that the fault lies with the beguiling counterfeit spirit. The third question asks what happens when they follow the Spirit of Christ.\* That person will flee from evil, the Saviour explains, will be

visited by the 'Incorruptible,' and will be admitted into the repose of the aeons\*, participating in the immovable generation.

Fourth, what happens to those who succumb to the false attractions of the counterfeit spirit? They will die and continue suffering until they awaken from the imposition on their thought. Only awakening to true knowledge, not death, enables the escape from the evil influence. Fifth, the questioner wants to know how the soul can shrink back down to enter its mother. Like Nicodemus who asks Jesus how a grown man can return to his mother's womb (*John 3*), he learns that one does *not* shrink back into mortal origins. Rather, by following the Spirit of Life, no one will be thrown into any flesh, either in the form of reincarnation or one's former birth experience. And sixth, if everyone ultimately comes to repose with the immovable race, what happens to those who gained the true gnosis (or knowledge) but consciously rejected it? The Saviour replies that they bring eternal punishment on themselves. It is their choice.

Then one last question surfaces: where does the counterfeit spirit come from? About to be exposed as utterly fraudulent, the Chief Ruler contrives to produce Fate, the last of the counterfeit chains. Although fear of enslavement to fate was rare by the second century,<sup>413</sup> here it is a rhetorical tool to "set the stage for a higher Providence to intervene and awaken humans from their enslavement."<sup>414</sup> As an astrological force, fate did not frighten people, but as Lewis notes, it *was* used as a mechanism for enslaving the '*other*,' who was not a member of the group with whom the author identifies.<sup>415</sup> Yaldabaoth was still not satisfied and regretted creating his entire creation. So he planned to flood it with darkness. First sending his demons to the daughters of men to produce offspring

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<sup>413</sup> A fuller discussion on second-century understanding of fate was in Chapter Five, "Evil as Belief" in the context of theories and beliefs associated with evil. Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism*, 28.

<sup>414</sup> Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism*, 52.

<sup>415</sup> Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism*, 28.



with them, then making the demons appear as the women's husbands and beguiling them with costly treasures, the demons led the women into 'much error' (25:14-16).

It is in this state that Pronoia appears and travels into the darkness in order to awaken and rescue all those in chaos and those who have fallen asleep. They were imprisoned in their bodies, suffering hopelessness and sorrow, but the 'Pronoia of the pure light' (26:26) enters into the prison of their bodies and calls them by name (26:21,24). They are instructed how to defend themselves against the angels of poverty and demons of chaos, and ultimately 'sealed with the light of the water with five seals,' a baptism that protects them from the power of death itself.

This final salvific act of the Saviour in *SRJ* appears to emphasise the cause and nature of suffering in order to understand the means of the rescue. The second and third descents by Pronoia are not included in the shorter version of *SRJ*, rendering Pronoia's work more a summary of work of the Saviour than a chronological event. That meaning is preserved in both versions. The Saviour's work is finished by his instruction to John (the disciple who questions the Saviour throughout the narrative) to write and share secretly the mystery of the immovable race.

## History of Christian Attitudes Toward Healing and Salvation

Part of my argument in favour of the close relationship between salvation and healing in *SRJ* is based on the more expansive meaning of *soteria*<sup>416</sup> in antiquity, as indicated in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

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<sup>416</sup> Since the only extant versions of *SRJ* are Coptic translations, scholars assume the original Greek version of the Coptic *oujai* (ΟΥΧΑΙ) is the Greek *soteria* (σωτηρία).

(TDNT).<sup>417</sup> Although our modern English translations usually refer only to a deliverance from the power and penalty of sin, these examples from *SRJ* illustrate the broader definition from TDNT.

*Soteria* offered rescue from serious peril:

...they picked him up and threw him down into the lowest part of all matter. ...So through his beneficent Spirit and his great mercy, he sent a helper to Adam (18:18, 22).

*Soteria* was expressed in health and well-being. The revelation of the Saviour included the naming of diseases, in order for them to be destroyed:

These [disease-causing demons] were named according to the glory of those who belong to heaven for the destruction of the powers (13:17-19).

*Soteria* saved from sin:

Immediately, the luminous Epinoia appeared for she had uncovered the veil which had been on his understanding. He became sober from the drunkenness of the darkness (21:18).

*Soteria* (the feminine noun) and its related terms, such as *sozo* (the verb), convey the meaning of salvation and its relation to healing quite clearly, as both terms are theologically understood in *SRJ* and in *S&H* (as well as in the New Testament). According to both texts, improved human conditions, such as 'healing,' correlate with improved morals, because both are governed by Christ (or the Saviour).

Although *sozo* retained its meaning throughout antiquity, the relationship between salvation in the church's purpose and the church's support of health and healing continually fluctuated even though it had always been present in the life of the church in different forms. A brief overview of the history of this relationship will contextualise the similarities and differences between the meaning of salvation and healing in *SRJ* and *S&H*. In many cases, the texts reflect the common attitudes of their times, yet they also offer unique perspectives.

In the Old Testament, *salvation* was primarily a corporate concern, such as the oft-repeated story of deliverance of the people of Israel, whereas *healing* was

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<sup>417</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. '*soteria*,' A1, 965-969.

most often seen as an individual experience, such as the restoration of health to Hezekiah and of life to the son of the widow of Zarephath (*1 Kings* 17). Some theories about a general swing from collective to individual salvation in the New Testament include the conceptions of salvation resulting from the rise of apocalyptic thinking during the intertestamental period, the vision of Jesus Christ as both divine agent and exemplar of salvation, and Paul's teaching of salvation from sin through faith in Christ. Individual healing thus became easier to conceive within the context of salvation.

Whereas the meaning of salvation would always involve more than experiences of healing,<sup>418</sup> healing works themselves by Jesus and by his apostles carried much more significance than a medical treatment. Sometimes these works were thought to signal the arrival of the Kingdom of God, and sometimes highlight Jesus's compassion toward human suffering. In New Testament context, *sozo* (translated as either 'to save' or 'to heal') indicates a broad meaning, from *Mark* 5:23 referring to a physical healing to *Luke* 8:36<sup>419</sup> referring to a rescue from mentally-tormenting demons.

In the development of this relationship in the Western church, Lapsley notes distinctive attitude changes toward healing in the two periods under discussion here, the patristic period and the nineteenth century. First, he claims that healing continued to play an important role in the life of the church until its decline in the Middle Ages, but was regarded as "one of the apostolic gifts."<sup>420</sup> While I agree that in antiquity healing played an important role in the life of the church, I argue that the Christians for whom healing was an integral aspect of

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<sup>418</sup> James N. Lapsley, "Theology of Salvation, Healing, and Health," pages 1107-10 in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 1107.

<sup>419</sup> *Mark* 5:23, according to NRSV reads "Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live;" the last phrase in Greek reads: "*ina soothe zēsē.*" *Luke* 8:36, according to NRSV reads "how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed;" in Greek: "*esōthē o pōs daimonistheis.*"

<sup>420</sup> Lapsley, "Theology of Salvation, Healing, and Health," 1107.

salvation did not see it as confined to apostolic gifts, as we will see in *SRJ*. At least in this case, the Saviour promises salvation for everyone (more fully discussed later in this chapter), and since physical healing was so closely associated with redemption, a healed person was a person moving toward salvation.

Second, Lapsley notes that the nineteenth century saw another period of significant attitude changes, particularly with more open and constructive attitudes toward health and healing. He attributes the nineteenth-century shift to three factors: the rise of dynamic psychology which called into question the split between body and soul, the challenge of CS, and the emergence of Pentecostalism. Following that trajectory, he saw that “in the late twentieth century various forces coalesced to form the holistic health movement, which, though loosely structured, put added pressure on both medicine and theology to deal with human beings as wholes rather than parts.”<sup>421</sup>

Consequently, while the church’s perspectives on healing have changed over the course of its two-thousand-year history, the following generalisations were probably noticeable in both the second and nineteenth centuries:

- (1) Cures in the name of Christ point to evidence of the power of Christian faith and the truth of Christian doctrine.
- (2) Christianity provides a cosmic vision of redemption as a means of coping with sin and suffering.
- (3) The celebration of relief from suffering is a sign of the power and meaning of one’s faith.
- (4) Emulating the compassion of Jesus, many Christians devote themselves to caring for the sick and dying – both with and without medicine.<sup>422</sup>

These enduring traits affirm that sickness and sin connect in some way, forming the root of Christian healing and demonstrating an inextricable relationship between healing and salvation. Although the cultural differences appear to affect attitudes and behaviours, the core of Christian healing within the context of

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<sup>421</sup> Lapsley, “Theology of Salvation, Healing, and Health,” 1107.

<sup>422</sup> Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 4-5.

salvation will be apparent in the conversation between *SRJ* and *S&H*. Specifically we find that the second-century text originates in a theology of human beings as whole entities, while the nineteenth-century text returns to the earlier paradigm with, as Lapsley mentioned, both medical and theological pressure to deal with human beings wholistically.

### Healing in Antiquity: Many Forms of Healing

In antiquity power and control gave structure to the meaning of health and healing. Life was organised by hierarchical systems, and daily life consisted of a battle between the supreme forces of demons and gods. Healing arts took many forms such as magic, exorcism, Greek medicine, divine intervention from healing gods such as Aesclepius and Isis, or a combination. They all competed with their particular demonstrations of power with varying motives, theologies and techniques. Judging from the polemic writings of the time, discrediting the healing works of others was a more urgent matter than perfecting one's own healing ability. Despite the biblical record that 'multitudes' were healed by Jesus,<sup>423</sup> most other second-century healing systems were better known than those of the Christians. And even among Christians, healing was practised in a variety of ways, including a form of *magic*. Hedrick explains:

Magic refers to efforts to control supernatural forces for one's own ends by means that rest on some peculiar and secret wisdom' (Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 212). Even within the New Testament Jesus was thought to perform his 'miraculous deeds' by magic (Mark 3:22; cf. Justin 1 *Apol.* 30; Origen *Cels.* 1:38). In fact, certain sayings attributed to Jesus heard from a certain perspective provide the matrix for the practice of early Christian magic.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> *Luke* 5:15, for example: But the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases.

<sup>424</sup> Charles Hedrick, *Secrets of the Gospel According to Thomas: A Radical Faith for a New Age* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010), 51.

Though it is often difficult for the modern Western mind to conceive, many scholars agree that disease itself was (and is) experienced differently according to cultural constructs.<sup>425</sup> Realising that the identification of disease and health is not necessarily a biomedical phenomenon possibly explains the lack of medical description in *SRJ*. Ancient worldviews of hierarchical powers that regulated all aspects of life from politics to economy, social status, and health, would have heightened the intensity of such values as honour and shame; and shame could be experienced as illness in some form. Leprosy, for example, was feared as the equivalent of a death sentence, not because of its sensation or capacity to kill, but because it caused society to shun those who were afflicted. It had the power to separate people from their communities, or life-support systems.<sup>426</sup>

Other highly influential etiological beliefs of the time emerged from this hierarchical principle. Demons, working in conjunction with the planets, could invade the functioning of bodies as well as the social order. This ‘invasion etiology,’ as Martin terms it, expresses helplessness before outside powers.<sup>427</sup> *SRJ* makes quite clear that demons controlled every aspect of the human body, from the eyes to the toe nails, so individual bodies and society suffered from hierarchical powers, and both needed rescue. *SRJ* also exhibits evidence of a newer common-sense etiology – ‘imbalance etiology’ – that ultimately superseded the helplessness of the ‘invasion etiology.’ The etiology of balance, Martin explains, conceptualised health and illness from the logic of balance and imbalance. Balance of earthly elements, relations to demons, and power relations all required watchful care, and

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<sup>425</sup> See a variety of examples: Gary Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 17; John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2000), 27; Pattison, *Alive and Kicking*, 13-14; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 140.

<sup>426</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 27.

<sup>427</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 161.

individuals felt a sense of control (or lack of control) over their own bodies and environment to the degree that they preserved balance.<sup>428</sup>

Substances that could be out of balance varied from the Hippocratic focus on bile and phlegm to the four elements that appear in *SRJ*: “The source of these demons who are in the whole body is fixed as four: heat, cold, wetness, dryness” (17:39). In *SRJ*, Sophia’s ‘deficiency’ (22:36) is an example of the widespread belief that imbalance of power caused disease and suffering, because the imbalance of her relationship with her heavenly partner caused her own suffering and consequently suffering for humanity. Her offspring, Yaldabaoth, battled to take over the control of humans and the Saviour’s role was to reassert control through the proper balance with the heavenly creator. The correction of Sophia’s ‘deficiency’ and its effects on humanity structures the central soteriological theme in *SRJ*.<sup>429</sup>

### *Healing in Antiquity: the Difference in Jesus’s Healings*

One way to narrow the definition of ‘Christian healing’ is to seek the pattern of Jesus’s teachings and healing works, but even with the records of Jesus’s works, we find great discrepancies. He left no prescription for healing techniques, and the canonical gospels report a variety of methods and motives. Jesus was a Jew, and the Jews had been healing (without medicine) long before he was born. Was his healing on the same or a different basis? Jesus himself did not practise medicine, but medicine was almost universally practised during and after Jesus’s time. The majority of early Christians may have been just as receptive to medicine

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<sup>428</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 147.

<sup>429</sup> Williams, *The Immovable Race*, 122.

as were their Greco-Roman contemporaries.<sup>430</sup> Even the canonical gospel authors perceived Jesus's healing works differently. Unlike *Luke*, *Mark*'s stories of Jesus's healings made little distinction between demon-possessed and demon-attacked sufferers;<sup>431</sup> and Jesus as an exorcist does not even occur in *John*. The gospels also report markedly different theological views, with contrasting motives behind the healing accounts.<sup>432</sup>

By what means, then, can healing be identified with Christian salvation? First, Jesus consistently taught that the kingdom of God was present, but different from ordinary society. His followers needed to perceive it and live it in order to understand salvation. Johnson-DeBaufre's research on *Q*<sup>433</sup> provides strong support in favour of identifying Jesus in such a community.<sup>434</sup> Her book, *Jesus Among Her Children*, "seeks to articulate the role that *Q* may have played in promoting group solidarity around a communal vision of the *basileia* [kingdom] of the God of Israel."<sup>435</sup> Jesus's concern was to make others aware of the presence of the kingdom/realm and how to live in accord with it.

A second possibility for associating healing with Christian salvation may be the widespread defensiveness and controversy over identifying the proper kind of healing. Pilch argues that a society's chief source of power is determined by its political, economic and cultural reality, and that knowing which views prevail

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<sup>430</sup> Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care*, 11.

<sup>431</sup> Audrey Dawson, *Healing, Weakness, and Power: Perspectives on Healing in the Writings of Mark, Luke and Paul* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 83.

<sup>432</sup> Dawson, *Healing, Weakness, and Power*, 101.

<sup>433</sup> Johnson-DeBaufre explains: "'Q' is short for the German *Quelle* or 'source;' it refers to the hypothetical sayings collection used by Matthew and Luke in the composition of their gospels." Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, *Jesus among Her Children: Q, Eschatology, and the Construction of Christian Origins*, eds. François Bovon, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Peter B. Machinist, *Harvard Theological Studies* 55 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 1.

<sup>434</sup> Johnson-DeBaufre, *Jesus among Her Children*, 1.

<sup>435</sup> Johnson-DeBaufre, *Jesus among Her Children*, 8.



determines both causes and cures for that culture's illnesses.<sup>436</sup> Johnson-DeBaufre claims that Jesus highlighted the chief source of power of the community of *basileia* (kingdom) of God – as his 'Father' or ruler. In *Q 11:15-20*, Jesus explicitly connects the community with healing in his Father's kingdom, arguing that God was his power source, not Beelzebub: "...if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast [them] out? Therefore, they shall be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the *basileia* of God has come upon you."<sup>437</sup>

The significance of this passage is that Jesus is concerned that 'your sons' ought to be included in the kingdom community. The power is of 'the finger of God' (or, in *Matthew*, the 'spirit of God'), and because Jesus is exercising this power to cast out demons, then 'your sons' (or those who learn from you) will be able to exercise the same power by participating in this 'Christian' kingdom community. Jesus claimed not only the supreme power but also the fact that everyone had a right to live under that authority and privilege.

Evidence of demonic presence appeared in the action of passions, which, as discussed in Chapter Five, were responsible for both physical and emotional turmoil. Healers needed to restore the stillness of the immovable generation. In this context, Jesus's emotional intensity (passion) in the garden of Gethsemane carried more significance than a psychological phenomenon of fear. "In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground" (*Luke 22:44*). But the author of *Hebrews* explained the intense suffering was the means by which Jesus became the Saviour of his disciples: "It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect

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<sup>436</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 26.

<sup>437</sup> Johnson-DeBaufre, *Jesus among Her Children*, 132-133. Johnson-DeBaufre explains that her translation follows the Greek reconstruction, which follows the International Q Project. 'Beelzebul' follows the Greek more closely than 'Beelzebub,' for example.

through sufferings” (*Hebrews* 2:10). According to *Hebrews*, then, Jesus’s victory over the greatest of all passions demonstrated his authority to save others.

### *Healing in Antiquity: Paul and Control of the Body*

The hierarchical configuration of the cosmos makes clear how and why the mental, intellectual aspects of being could dominate unintelligent, material forms, a phenomenon that is predominant in *SRJ*. Martin demonstrates the mental construction of being that he identifies in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians:

Just as *pneuma* is the highest element in the human body, the element of human thought and the essence of life itself (2:11), so the divine *pneuma* is the substance of the communication of divine wisdom (2:10-11).<sup>438</sup> The *pneuma* of ‘this world’ ... is only a weak and misleading (that is, sin-inducing) false copy of the *pneuma* shared by God and Christians.<sup>439</sup>

The critical difference between Paul’s understanding of healing and saving, and that of the more popular theories of his time, is that for Paul, disease caused by discord was a physiological fact.<sup>440</sup> When the divine *pneuma*<sup>441</sup> is governing, human beings do not suffer, but when the false copy (or *pneuma* ‘of this world’) is permitted control, human suffering takes place in mind and body. For this reason, Paul attributes salvific powers only to the Messiah, whose supreme authority provides the right source of *pneuma*. *SRJ* illustrates this idea, distinguishing between the *pneuma* of the divine wisdom and the pseudo-*pneuma* of the worldly realm. Its detailed account of the governing powers’ deceptive and evil nature

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<sup>438</sup> *1 Cor* 2:10-11, NRSV. “...these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God.”

<sup>439</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 63.

<sup>440</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 196-7.

<sup>441</sup> *Pneuma* (πνεῦμα) is usually translated ‘spirit.’

alerts the reader to their dangers. For example, “when Yaldabaoth knew that they [the people he had created] had withdrawn from him, he cursed his earth” (22:1-2). For both Paul and the author of *SRJ*, the body is connected to consciousness on the mind-body spectrum, so whatever affected thought also affected the more material end of the spectrum. Therefore, when the Saviour of *SRJ* saves (or awakens) consciousness from evil influence, the individual is rescued from mental and bodily suffering.

### Second-century Healing and Salvation

Three distinctive elements of salvation in *SRJ* characterise its author’s understanding of healing. The ‘Pleroma’ (fullness) is the home where no lack of health or goodness can enter. Demons, therefore, cannot invade or disrupt the heavenly harmony. Repentance is required of those who have lost their bearings, and their return is welcome. And finally, universal salvation – or the safe return to the original realm of perfection – is available to all who do repent.

### *Pleroma and Demons*

The Saviour’s rescue work in *SRJ* could never dichotomise sin and disease, because life in the Pleroma, is firmly established as complete, whole, perfect, unsurpassable, and immovable. Neither sin nor disease is included. Health and innocence of all beings, or aeons, are derived from and protected by the same source, but the apparent birth into sin and the necessity of disease and death arise from the deceiving work of the demons, who distort every detail of good that God had done. God has prepared a messenger, or Saviour, to *save* people from that distortion and to return them to their inherent *gnosis* of health, innocence and eternal life in the Pleroma.

*SRJ* is a product of its times as much as a product of the author's Christian purpose. The notion of cosmic completeness, or Pleroma, was a technical term of Stoic philosophical language that Paul and other early Christian writers adopted, and the Septuagint and New Testament also made non-technical uses of the term in phrases such as 'the earth and the *fullness* thereof' or 'the fullness of time.' In Hermetic use,<sup>442</sup> the Pleroma denotes the whole cosmic totality, filled with Spirit or divine being.<sup>443</sup> The author of *SRJ* depends on both the Pleroma and general understanding of demons to argue his case for salvation.

In the second century, demons – and the Saviour who battles demons – function on the basis of the unity of salvation and healing. Modern thinkers often dismiss the exorcisms from demon possession performed by Jesus and others as bizarre and difficult to relate to, with explanations such as hysteria, neurosis, and schizophrenia. Some recent biblical interpretations imagine the phenomena as repressed emotions and inner conflicts superimposed by early Christians onto an outside 'unclean spirit.' But these views project a modern western concept of the self as an integrated person with conflicts residing inside<sup>444</sup> and obscure the salvific purposes of the healing works. A second-century perspective reveals nearly universal belief in an invasion of alien forces. Cosmic demonic struggles indicate that the healing work is more than a personal battle.<sup>445</sup> It is, in fact, "a means

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<sup>442</sup> Hermetic mysticism refers to the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, or whatever phenomena travel between the conscious and unconscious.

<sup>443</sup> R. A. Markus, "Pleroma and Fulfilment: The Significance of History in St. Irenaeus' Opposition to Gnosticism." *Vigiliae Christianae* 8, no. 4 (1954). For further information on the source and meaning of 'Pleroma,' see esp. 197-201.

<sup>444</sup> Richard A. Horsley, "'My Name is Legion': Spirit Possession and Exorcism in Roman Palestine," *Experientia, Volume 1: Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity*. eds., Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, Rodney A. Werline. Symposium Series. ed. Victor H. Matthews, (Boston: Brill, 2008), 41-42.

<sup>445</sup> For example: *Mark* 1:23-28 (the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue) and *Mark* 5:1-20 (the Gerasene demoniac).

through which the believer participates in and experiences the cosmic struggle between the kingdom of God and Satan."<sup>446</sup>

Since the body was believed to be part of a hierarchical microcosmic part of the cosmos, every demonic act that affected anyone's body was part of a cosmic threat. No one's body could be separated from the structure of society, the political body, or the cosmos, nor could the present be separated from the future. Bodies suffered when demons, or impersonal thought-powers greater than the individual, invaded any element of the cosmos; therefore, the Saviour's destruction of demons freed people to return to their 'root' with the immovable generation. Health and freedom from the temptations of sin were synonymous with freedom from passions, and the human body served as the agency through which salvation and healing were both experienced. Every facet of the climb out of darkness contributed to the full salvation.

### *Repentance*

To ensure conscious awareness of reality, *SRJ*'s author emphasises that awakening cannot be accomplished without repentance on the part of the 'dreamer' or 'believer.' Whether Sophia's sin of wanting to create an offspring without the consent of her consort (Invisible Spirit) was ignorant or willful, Sophia's return to the immovable race serves as a model for repentance.<sup>447</sup>

she repented with great weeping. And the entreaty of her repentance was heard and all the Fullness praised the invisible virginal Spirit on her behalf.

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<sup>446</sup> Rodney Werline, "The Experience of Prayer and Resistance to Demonic Powers in the Gospel of Mark," in *Experientia, Volume 1: Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity*, eds. Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney A. Werline, *Symposium Series.*, ed. Victor H. Matthews (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 62.

<sup>447</sup> Verse 11 of this text (chapter 14) indicates that Sophia was 'overcome in the darkness of ignorance,' but earlier in the narrative, she is said to have "thought a thought from within herself and the thought of the invisible Spirit and Foreknowledge. She *willed* a likeness to appear from within herself without the will of the Spirit... She deliberated apart from the will of the Spirit and the understanding of her partner" (10:1-3,5).

... it was through the Fullness that he [her partner] came to her in order that he might correct her deficiency (14:22,23,26,27).

Repentance is essential in the divine realm of *SRJ*, and Sophia resides in it with those who have repented and experienced a purification from evil.<sup>448</sup> She and other inhabitants needed to repent and *understand* the powerlessness of evil, since they had all been duped in some fashion before they came to this heavenly realisation. The Saviour has rescued all of them through their cooperation with repentance. The Coptic cognate of the Greek *metanoia* ('repentance') means 'a change of mind' and turning away, so repentance can carry the meaning of seeing the situation differently or finding a better view of the one reality. In *SRJ*, the various Saviour characters inspire *metanoia* by descending to humanity, awakening them and calling them to turn away from the darkness, forgetfulness, and ignorance, and encouraging them to return to the original realm.

The *need* for repentance raises an important theological question in the context of salvation. If sin is unreal or powerless, and one needs merely to awaken, why should anyone repent? Again, Sophia models the essential role of repentance by illustrating how salvation must include both the work of the Saviour and the participation of the one who repents. Her role as sinful mother of the grotesque creator-god mocked the omnipotence of God, but her *means* of overcoming her 'deficiency' (14:5) prepared her for the healing of her emotions and serves as a Christian model for repentance.<sup>449</sup> Just at the point where the counterfeit god (Sophia's offspring) realised he is in competition with a greater God and wanted to claim sole deific existence, Sophia

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<sup>448</sup> The third level of existence of this divine realm consists of Autogenes-Christ and four lights, which are over four types: Adam, Seth, Seed of Seth, and lastly, the Penitent (those who finally repent). Each light is associated with three other aeons, and one of those twelve is Sophia, who is associated with the last category, the Penitent.

<sup>449</sup> King references Zlato Plese's PhD diss., where he argues that Sophia's repentance is a model for every Gnostic [see Plese, "The Apocryphon of John: Narrative, Cosmology, Composition." (PhD diss., Yale University, 1996), 206-207, 217-218." King, *The Secret Revelation of John*, footnote #44, 337.]

began to move to and fro as she understood her deficiency. It was her own perfection that had caused her to be blamed...And when the Mother [Sophia] understood that the untimely birth of the darkness was not perfect because her partner had not been in concord with her, she repented. She wept great tears (14:5,6,20-22).

Reading too quickly, we might assume the author meant that it was Sophia's *imperfection* that caused her guilt. Rather, her permanent *perfection* is strengthened and affirmed in the healing process. When she fully repents, she returns to her original place in the perfect realm.

The use of the Greek term *metanoia* (repentance) strengthens this reading, according to Boehm, as it includes a change of one's mind.<sup>450</sup> And, if that "change of mind derives from recognition that the earlier view was foolish, improper or evil, there arises the sense 'to regret,'..."<sup>451</sup> Sophia's change of mind includes both the acknowledgement of her foolish and improper behaviour and deep remorse. Jesus in the *Gospel of John* relates the act of repentance to the concept of birth directly from God. Being born of God entitles one to the spiritual power that leads the way into God's kingdom.<sup>452</sup> *John 3* reports Nicodemus's incredulity at Jesus's teaching that one must be born from above to see the kingdom of God. Speaking to an adult human, Jesus implied that this birth would take place by a change of mind, and that Nicodemus should acknowledge his origin from Spirit, rather than the flesh. Sophia's repentance resulted in such acknowledgement *and* her return to 'the kingdom' of Spirit (14:26-28).

The Saviour (Christ) relieved suffering of pain on the same basis as the temptation to sin: humans are saved from the view that devils/demons can distort God's good works, and they are free to return to their proper view of health and innocence. Repentance is the human *agreement* to respond to Christ's correction.

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<sup>450</sup> Significantly, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament's* entry on *metanoia* is listed under the larger category, *nous*. This categorisation indicates that repentance is more closely related to the change of *mind*, than a mere acknowledgement of sin. See vol. 4, 975.

<sup>451</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. *μετανοέω*, A.I.2., p. 976 and A.I.3., p. 977.

<sup>452</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. *μετανοέω*, E.II.3.c., p. 1005.

## *Universal Salvation*

Since healing and salvation are conceived together as awakening and restoration to the immovable race in *SRJ*, the availability of universal health rights is contingent upon the possibility of universal salvation. I argue that *SRJ* teaches universal salvation, but Ramelli argues that while “a form of apokatastasis is detectable” in *SRJ*, it “does not entail universal salvation.”<sup>453</sup> The crux of the disagreement is who or what it saved. *SRJ* and texts affiliated with other Coptic Nag Hammadi texts argue salvation is available for some, but not the *ulike* (‘those who are material in nature’) or some of the *psuche* (‘psychic’). Resurrection, in these Coptic texts, “consists in the apokatastasis of the soul, which returns to its original abode, whereas the resurrection of the body is excluded.”<sup>454</sup> Those who are material cannot return to their original conditions.

Ramelli’s argument against universal salvation in *SRJ* is based on her interpretation of the Saviour’s responses to a series of questions regarding salvation posed by the disciple John.<sup>455</sup> It rests on a presumption of Gnostic guilt, which I claim distorts her reading of the text. In response to the final question about those “who understood and yet turned away,” the text says

...they will be admitted into that place where the angels of poverty go, the place where repentance does not occur. And they will guard them until that day when those who have blasphemed against the Spirit will be tortured. And they will be punished with an eternal punishment (23:38-40).

Ramelli interprets this passage as evidence that “here restoration [salvation] is *not universal*. ...Some souls will never be restored to their original

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<sup>453</sup> Ramelli defines the Christian doctrine of apokatastasis as “universal restoration of rational creatures to God,” which she distinguishes from Philo of Alexandria’s view that it is the “restoration of the soul to virtue, spiritual health, and spiritual life.” Ramelli, “Apokatastasis,” 33.

<sup>454</sup> Ramelli, “Apokatastasis,” 35.

<sup>455</sup> These six questions are identified in the beginning of Chapter Six, “Interpretation of *SRJ* Narrative, Theme Three,” summarised from *SRJ* 23:1-37.



abode, not even after several reincarnations, but will endure punishment forever.”<sup>456</sup> This is based on a traditional interpretation of Gnostic assumptions, such as: “Indeed, the *ulikes*, those belonging to the ‘material’ nature, and a part of the *psuches*, were excluded from salvation so that the latter cannot possibly be universal.”<sup>457</sup>

However, the author of *SRJ* makes no reference in this passage to *ulike* or *psuche*, but rather refers to those who refuse to repent. The common argument presumes that only some would be saved, because Gnostics believed in deterministic elitism<sup>458</sup> -- the claim that some, such as the *pneumatikoi* (‘the spiritual ones’), believe themselves to be inherently superior to others. But as I argued earlier,<sup>459</sup> *SRJ* treats these three categories as states of consciousness not as classifications of people. Therefore, people all share the same origin, and when they ‘return’ or are saved, they will return to the same original abode of perfection, regardless of whether they temporarily engaged in material, psychic, or spiritual tendencies. In this text, the Saviour explains that *those who do not repent* – not material or psychic kinds of people – will suffer eternal punishment.

The Saviour had already explained in response to the second question that those who neglect to respond to the saving spirit of Life will have another opportunity to repent. “If the Spirit descends upon them, they will be saved in any case, and they will migrate [come out from evil]”<sup>460</sup> (23:14). Furthermore, to emphasise the cause of ‘neglecting to respond,’ the Saviour explains that the

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<sup>456</sup> Ramelli, “Apokatastasis,” 37.

<sup>457</sup> Ramelli, “Apokatastasis,” 34.

<sup>458</sup> Williams argues the notion of fixed identity and destination as a category of Gnostic characteristics in chapter nine, *Rethinking “Gnosticism,”* 189-212.

<sup>459</sup> The topic of three states of consciousness versus three types of people was discussed in Chapter Five, “Interpretation of *SRJ* Narrative, Theme Two.”

<sup>460</sup> This parallel version from BG offers a helpful rendition of this verse: “those upon whom that Spirit comes will live in any case and come out from evil.”

“counterfeit spirit descends” and leads them astray (23:18); it is not their original state that causes a lack of repentance.

So, in response to the sixth question, when the Saviour explains who will be “punished with an eternal punishment,” the Saviour is offering a *choice* to each individual. Those continuing to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit will experience torture forever, *or until* they change their minds. The Spirit will come to everyone, and the Spirit does not fail to save, except for those who refuse to repent. After all, John’s first question for the Saviour was whether “all souls will be delivered...,” and the Saviour’s response that “Those upon whom the Spirit of the Life will descend and (with whom) it will be powerfully present, they will be saved and will become perfect...and they will be purified in that place from all evil and the concerns of wickedness” (23:4,6). And even more explicitly, the Saviour says in response to the next question, “For the power will descend upon every human being” (23:15).

To argue for consistency with these texts, the Saviour’s answer to his final question would be read as an explanation for what happens to people who have not yet been willing to repent. They will remain in the torture *until* they yield to the power of the Spirit of Life. Ramelli’s interpretation of the Saviour’s sixth response reveals another presumption of Gnostic guilt by adding that “Some, who have knowledge and *practice asceticism*, can be saved immediately (emphasis added).”<sup>461</sup> Interpreting “they will be purified ...from all evil and the concerns of wickedness” as “practice[ing] asceticism” stems from another Gnostic cliché. This kind of purification from evil indicates no greater tendency toward asceticism than ordinary Christian practice. Williams argues that

There may be no cliché with respect to “gnosticism” that had been more commonly repeated than the claim that “gnostic” myth typically produced either fanatical asceticism or the debaucheries of libertinism—either the systematic denial of the material body or the systematic violation of the

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<sup>461</sup> Ramelli, “Apokatastasis,” 37.

ethical laws imposed by its creator(s).<sup>462</sup>

The presumption of Gnostic guilt does not account for textual consistency and seriously misleads the interpreter. Rather, interpreting the Saviour's sixth response as an explanation for the type of suffering in store for those who do not repent is consistent with the idea expressed throughout the text that salvation requires a Saviour, but individuals must choose to be transformed and cooperate with the purification required of them.

*SRJ* also calls for the work of salvation to precede the departure from the body, as is indicated in the Saviour's reply to the first question: "They [that is, those who will be saved] are not restrained by anything except the reality of the flesh alone, which they bear while fervently awaiting the time when they will be visited by those who will receive (them)" (23: 9, 10). In *SRJ* salvation requires participation. While no one can be saved without the assistance of the Saviour, the Spirit of Life, everyone has a chance to be saved if he or she is willing. They must be willing to participate in the expunging of evil within. But they cannot accomplish this work on their own. The Saviour assures John that even when humans are drawn back into wickedness and imprisoned again, the Savior will return and awaken them again until they are "perfected and saved" (23:26-31).

According to *SRJ* all human suffering – whether self-imposed sin or imposed by disease – yields to the Saviour's power to save. Individuals who choose not to yield may suffer as long as they refuse to repent, but the Saviour is prepared to save everyone who is willing.

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<sup>462</sup> Michael A. Williams, 'Are you, or have you ever been a gnostic?' Caricatures, Blacklists, and Understanding the Aspirations and Lives of Real People" (Paper presented at the Westar Fall 2014 Seminar. San Diego, 2014), 6.

## Healing in the Nineteenth Century: Individualism

By the nineteenth century, attitudes toward salvation and religion had drifted away from their roots in the cosmos. And the notion of health, although not as tightly connected with salvation, also shifted from a collective to a personal experience. Eddy herself cared deeply about societal reform, but the link between health and society for her was individual moral responsibility. She also argued that social reform was too narrow and less effective than the social transformation created by the reformers who laboured to uplift the race.<sup>463</sup> Healing others was the highest service to God and humanity, because it required the greatest spiritual growth and gave others what was most needed. Personal salvation could never substitute for a commitment to society's needs, because salvation is the utter commitment to love for the benefit of others.

But in the larger context of society, the move toward individualism emphasised health as a personal bodily and medically defined concept. To translate that concept from twenty-first-century models back into a nineteenth-century context, we should be mindful that World War II catapulted the practice of medicine into a new era. Before the twentieth century, penicillin had not been available; bacterial infections were out of control; immunology had not yet made an impact on infectious diseases such as smallpox, measles, diphtheria, typhoid, yellow fever, and tuberculosis, which "had been the scourge of civilization for millennia."<sup>464</sup> Understandably, many were unsatisfied with medical promises and sought remedies from a wide variety of sources.

Those who embraced the popular cold-water cure of the middle of the nineteenth-century became part of a larger movement that deified nature and

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<sup>463</sup> Voorhees, "Writing Revelation," 105-7.

<sup>464</sup> Stark, "Rise and Fall," 212.

transformed it into a religion.<sup>465</sup> Nature religions, ambiguously defined anywhere from the physical world to the abstract principle of environmentalism, inspired a relationship with God and the physical world, and promised natural healings as a result. Hydropathy (the water cure), herbal healing, homeopathy, and later osteopathy and chiropractic all held the understanding of “nature and mind as primary principles and the healing act as the expression of virtue through ritual.”<sup>466</sup>

With a healthy blend of the medical paradigm, the nature religions, and Christian attitudes toward healing, the notions of health and healing were, as they have always been, in the eye of the beholder.<sup>467</sup> They were (and are) ambiguous, because each method and perspective offered strengths despite their weaknesses. A feature common to religions of both the second and nineteenth centuries is their competitive tendencies which excluded other healing systems. As in antiquity, the denunciation of those who differed appears to have required as much energy as the perfecting of the healing ability.

An example is the rivalry between Eddy’s CS and the Divine Healing movement in late nineteenth-century America. Headquartered in the same New England vicinity at the same time, they both struggled with the medical community to defend Christian healing without medicine. Both recorded numerous extraordinary physical healings through prayer alone. Both also confronted the Protestant opposition to Christian healing they had inherited from the Protestant Reformation. Calvin’s sixteenth-century argument against the application of *James* 5<sup>468</sup> to healing practices had been directed at the Roman

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<sup>465</sup> Catherine L. Albanese, “Physic and metaphysic in 19th-century America: medical sectarians and religious healing,” *Church History* 55, no. 4 (1986), 489.

<sup>466</sup> Albanese, “Physic and metaphysic,” 492.

<sup>467</sup> Pattison, *Alive and Kicking*, 17.

<sup>468</sup> Referring specifically to *James* 5:13-15 (KJV, standard nineteenth century translation). “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name

Catholics, so it carried weight in the hearts of the faithful Protestants. Laying on of hands, Calvin argued, was a shallow attempt to resemble the apostles, and asking God to heal betrayed a lack of gratitude.<sup>469</sup>

Most Protestants continued to distance themselves from healing, however, as attitudes had begun to shift during the Enlightenment, and the debates turned toward the struggle between reason and revelation, deists and skeptics. New religious groups with only a nodding acceptance of Christian principles, such as Spiritualists and Theosophists, sprang up and appealed to a wide variety of people.<sup>470</sup> The Divine Healing movement and CS both maintained their ties to Christian origins for healing, but their rivalry overshadowed their commonalities. The Divine Healing movement maintained its ties with orthodox evangelism, and Eddy thought a more scientific approach to Scriptures strengthened the healing efficacy of Christian theology, but they both claimed commitment to and authority directly from the Bible.

#### Nineteenth-century Healing and Salvation

While healing and salvation easily correlated in the second century, the relationship has been contentious in the modern era. Tyndale's sixteenth-century English translation of the New Testament threatened church authorities with its anti-ecclesiastical bias.<sup>471</sup> It also offered a translation of *Luke 19:9* that appears to have lived only as long as Tyndale's original translation was read. This verse is Jesus's pronouncement to Zacchaeus that a wonderful thing had happened because Zacchaeus was ready to give to the poor and to practise honesty in his

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of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

<sup>469</sup> Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 39.

<sup>470</sup> Shaw, *Miracles*, 180.

<sup>471</sup> Mary Metzner Trammell and William G. Dawley, *The Reforming Power of the Scriptures: A Biography of the English Bible* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1996), 150.

business dealings. In the Greek, Jesus said that today *sōteria tō oikō toutō egeneto*. Tyndale's first Greek-to-English translation read: "Today *health* has come to this house," but subsequent translations read, "Today *salvation* has come to this house." Maddocks observes: "Had we kept Tyndale's translation *health* and *heal* through the Bible instead of *salvation* and *save*, our ideas on the subject might have been more spacious!"<sup>472</sup>

In fact, the mid-nineteenth-century Western Christian tradition had already radically distanced itself from *soteria* as a power to preserve health when Eddy began her serious search for health in the Bible. She was as concerned with salvation from sin as were other Christians, but to her the loss of the full meaning of salvation resulted from a flagrant misunderstanding of Jesus's mission to usher in the kingdom of God. The good morals required for Zacchaeus's health or salvation were the result of aligning with God's order or harmony. For Eddy, such moral strength was essential for the health of the whole body: "The moral and spiritual facts of health, whispered into thought, produce very direct and marked effects on the body."<sup>473</sup> Therefore, Christians should feel morally obliged to heal themselves and others as an everyday demonstration of Christian and spiritual growth.

### *Cessationism*

Eddy and other Protestants of the period opposed the more prevalent Protestant belief in cessationism, the Christian teaching that miraculous cures ceased with the death of the apostles. It was, to Eddy, direct disobedience to Christ Jesus's command for his disciples to heal the sick, and it violated the full meaning of salvation. The historic Protestant aversion to Christian healing lay in protest

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<sup>472</sup> Maddocks, *Christian Healing Ministry*, 9-10.

<sup>473</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 370.

against the Catholic worship of relics, saints, and mediaries. Protestant leaders of the sixteenth century, such as Luther and Calvin, claimed that so-called miracles were the work of the devil misleading the unwary.<sup>474</sup> Despite the Protestant doctrine, Eddy's call to "every child, man, and woman" to heal as a follower of Jesus<sup>475</sup> was a sign of shifting views.

On one side of the new dilemma was the moral virtue of patient resignation; on the other, the idea of divine healing. Popular authors such as Susan Warner, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Elizabeth Prentiss praised pious invalids for their Christian sainthood. Others encouraged faith in scriptural passages such as *Exodus* 15:26, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," and *James* 5:15 (the verse Calvin opposed), "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."<sup>476</sup> The condition of Jennie Smith of Ohio epitomised this dilemma. In 1878, after sixteen years in invalidism, her prayers convinced her that it must be God's will to heal her. Summoning friends to pray with her, she offered God her "body anew," asking one final time that God's will be done. After a brief moment, she felt a "baptism of strength" pass through her body, and she was healed.<sup>477</sup>

### *Moral Elements of Healing*

Smith grappled with the moral questions pressing on the Puritan (American Protestant) community, which was committed to obedience to God. How was one to reconcile rejoicing in one's afflictions with praying for recovery?<sup>478</sup> The questions themselves fused the relationship between the moral

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<sup>474</sup> Shaw, *Miracles*, 22-24.

<sup>475</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 37.

<sup>476</sup> Heather D. Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician: Suffering and Divine Healing in American Culture, 1860-1900* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 2. The King James Version was the predominant translation at this period.

<sup>477</sup> Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician*, 5.

<sup>478</sup> Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician*, 4.



and physical more profoundly, providing the link between God's power and willingness to heal. Eddy affirmed that "Moral conditions will be found always harmonious and health-giving."<sup>479</sup> Health was a moral imperative because of its supporting role in the full salvation. Eddy's assertions remained consistent with her Puritan upbringing committed to the strong moral foundation of daily life with the Bible. Her indoctrinated obedience to God and her physical and emotional suffering, which demanded practical help from the Bible in the absence of human aid, convinced her of the rightness of God's power to heal.

Repentance, as a moral act, was as important to Eddy's theology of healing and salvation as it was for the author of *SRJ*. One could not expect to awaken from a dream or belief without repentance. Eddy argues: "Without a knowledge of his sins, and repentance so severe that it destroys them, no person is or can be a Christian Scientist."<sup>480</sup> The theological question asked of *SRJ* persists with Eddy's theology. Why repent if sin is unreal? The authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* handle these questions differently, but again, with similar conclusions. Despite Eddy's insistence that effective repentance requires "a knowledge of [one's] sins,"<sup>481</sup> she states unambiguously that sin must be known as *false* in order to avoid believing in it and suffering from it. She taught, for instance that "Sin needs only to be known for what it is not; then we are its master, not servant. Remember, and act on, Jesus's definition of sin as a *lie*" (emphasis original).<sup>482</sup> Eddy thus explains that one must repent of or turn from the *belief* of evil in order to be free of its supposed effects.

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<sup>479</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 125.

<sup>480</sup> "Be[ing] a Christian Scientist" refers to the proper practice of the Science of Christ and does not signify membership in the denomination of Christian Science. Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 107.

<sup>481</sup> Referring to quote above, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 107.

<sup>482</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 108.

Some examples of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American writing illustrate the developing belief in the correlation between morals and health. In a short editorial in an 1896 edition of the magazine *Outlook*:

...body and soul are so twisted together in one strand as to defy untwisting. ...The laws of health are moral laws... The true physician at once teaches his patient that the laws of God must not be broken, and that there are laws of mercy also, by which penalty for broken laws may be partly remitted.<sup>483</sup>

And in a 1905 article produced for a legal defence of CS, Judge Septimus Hanna (a student of Eddy's) expounded on the relationship between behavioural sins and human suffering:

All know that the death of thousands, annually, is caused, directly or indirectly, by the excessive use of intoxicating liquors. Could this single cause of death and distress be removed, the percentage of sickness and of all the consequences thereof, would be so greatly reduced that the unthinking world would be amazed thereat. ... Another prolific cause of human misery and death is immorality in its varied forms. ... If we could further remove the sickness, with its results, which arises from mental worry and depression, we would so lessen the sum-total of human wretchedness ...<sup>484</sup>

Both of these sources also demonstrate the nineteenth-century belief in the impact of the behavioural sins on society's health. The attitudes expressed in the *Outlook* article "formed the foundation for the clean-living movements of the nineteenth-century, which promoted temperance, abstinence, and rigorous standards in food and dress."<sup>485</sup> And, Hanna continued:

Further, who will deny that the sin of social dissipation in its varied forms is a prolific source of disease and suffering? Finally, take the use of tobacco, excessive eating and the almost endless forms of dissipation existing even in Christendom, - to say nothing of heathendom, - and who is there to deny the train of discords and diseases following in the wake of these sins?<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Brandy Scalise, "Preaching Without a Pulpit: Women's Rhetorical Contributions to Scientific Christianity in America, 1880-1915." (University of Pennsylvania, 2011), 90. The article quoted is "The Commonwealth: VI. The Doctor." 54.11 (12 Sept. 1896): 462. *American Periodicals Series*. Web. 1 Dec. 2008.

<sup>484</sup> Septimus Hanna, "Christian Science: a Practical Religion," pages 51-69, *Legal Aspects of Christian Science 1895-1914* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1905), 57-58.

<sup>485</sup> Scalise, "Preaching Without a Pulpit," 90. The article quoted is "Commonwealth: Doctor," *Outlook*, 462.

<sup>486</sup> Hanna, "Christian Science," 64.

In her own healing works, class teaching and writing, Eddy used the precept that moral law legitimises the healing power of God. An example is recounted by Anna B. White Baker, who served in Eddy's household around the turn of the twentieth century:

Mrs. Eddy had told us of Miss E[aton], a young child of 12 yrs. whom she had healed of cataracts in her early work in Science – She was visiting the parents, and seeing the child in a very ugly attack of temper, sternly rebuked her saying, '[W]hen you can see to do right you will see with your eyes' – then naming the expression, 'you have no eyes.' The child instantly became still and her sight was restored." Mrs. Eddy wrote the Bakers afterwards, 'I write to say I forgot my close to that sentence to the blind Miss Eaton. It was this, 'You have no eyes' – meaning 'having eyes ye see not' then the cataract moved off.<sup>487</sup>

In another case, Eddy recalls a case, emphasising the biblical authority she drew upon.

I [Eddy] was once called to visit a sick man to whom the regular physicians had given three doses of Croton oil, and then had left him to die. Upon my arrival I found him barely alive, and in terrible agony. In one hour he was well, and the next day he attended to his business. ...According to [the physicians'] diagnosis, the exciting cause of the inflammation and stoppage was – eating smoked herring. ... Now comes the question: Had that sick man dominion over the fish in his stomach? His want of control over 'the fish of the sea' must have been an illusion, or else the Scriptures misstate man's power. That the Bible is true I believe, not only, but I *demonstrated* its truth when I exercised my power over the fish, cast out the sick man's illusion and healed him.

Later, the moral relevance of the story was reported in the *Boston Traveller*:

...Remarkable as was the man's physical healing, even more remarkable was the transformation in his thought and life. His wife told Mrs. [Glover/Eddy] a few days later that she had never before seen him [hug] his children as other fathers did, but on the night of his recovery he called them to him, and taking them in his arms he told them that he loved them; and with tears rolling down his cheeks he said to his wife, 'I am going to be a better man.'<sup>488</sup>

From Eddy's perspective it was natural for moral and spiritual restoration to accompany physical reconstruction as a present and visible aspect of salvation. If Eddy had healed just a few cases, they might have been considered miracles. But her vast healing record gave her reason to identify her healing system, not as an

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<sup>487</sup> von Fettweis, *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer (Amplified)*, 416.

<sup>488</sup> von Fettweis, *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer (Amplified)*, 81.

exception to the rule, but as demonstration of the universality of salvation.<sup>489</sup> The opening words in the first chapter of *S&H* summarise her view that the reason salvation and healing are linked is that both require absolute faith, and both fall in the category of ‘things that are possible to God.’

The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God, — a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love. ... Prayer, watching, and working, combined with self-immolation, are God's gracious means for accomplishing whatever has been successfully done for the Christianization and health of mankind.<sup>490</sup>

She frequently turned to her own healing works and those of others as confirmation that reforming the sinner and healing the sick were divine imperatives, one and the same in Christian salvation.

Atheists, agnostics, sinners and saints are all invited to full salvation, according to Eddy. Her definition of hell includes the phrase, ‘self-imposed agony,’ so hell is not a designated assignment from a capricious judge. Rather, individuals who experience the torture of hell even on earth have what they need in order to make another choice, because she argues, “In divine Science, where prayers are mental, *all* may avail themselves of God as ‘a very present help in trouble.’ Love is impartial and universal in its adaptation and bestowals.”<sup>491</sup> However, she takes Paul’s admonition seriously that salvation is not a future reward, but a present promise and requirement. She says of *2 Corinthians 6:2*: “*Now*,” cried the apostle, ‘is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation,’ — meaning, not that now men must prepare for a future-world

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<sup>489</sup> von Fettweis and Warneck documented well over one hundred known cases of Eddy’s own healing work in *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer (Amplified)*; see pages 608-613 in the index for a list of healing works; one hundred pages of testimonials by people who were healed only by reading *S&H* are located at the end of the book; and she taught hundreds more to heal on their own through her class instruction.

<sup>490</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 1.

<sup>491</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 12.

salvation, or safety, but that now is the time in which to experience that salvation in spirit and in life.”<sup>492</sup>

Eddy emphasises even more urgently than *SRJ* that “The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner’s part.”<sup>493</sup> Following Paul’s exhortation to ‘work out one’s own salvation,’ she, like the author of *SRJ*, conceives Christ as the only means for salvation, providing for humans the escape route they must take.

The way through which immortality and life are learned is not ecclesiastical but Christian, not human but divine, not physical but metaphysical, not material but scientifically spiritual. Human philosophy, ethics, and superstition afford no demonstrable divine Principle by which mortals can escape from sin; yet to escape from sin, is what the Bible demands.<sup>494</sup>

If we fail to accept our responsibility, she teaches, we will continue to repeat the mistakes until genuine transformation occurs.

Eddy rejected all the post-Augustinian Western atonement theories, because they seemed to contradict Jesus’s instructions to heal the sick *along with* preaching the gospel. She never referred to Pelagianism in her published writing, but she agreed with the Pelagianist view of human choice, which upheld responsibility for sin, rather than the Augustinian view that minimised human freedom and responsibility.<sup>495</sup> Eddy perceived that the lack of personal responsibility also tends to encourage helplessness in regard to healing. However, Eddy also opposed Pelagius’s view that salvation could be *earned* through good works, emphasising that God did not need help from humans to rectify His<sup>496</sup> own

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<sup>492</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 39.

<sup>493</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 22.

<sup>494</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 98.

<sup>495</sup> González, *History of Christian Thought*, 31.

<sup>496</sup> In keeping with the tradition of her day, ‘man’ was used in a generic sense. But she wanted to clarify that “Masculine, feminine, and neuter genders are human concepts. In one of the ancient languages the word for man is used also as the synonym of mind.” (Eddy, *Science and Health*, 516). She also used the masculine, capitalised personal pronoun for God, despite the fact that she identified God as Father and Mother.

work. “Christians are commanded to *grow in grace*. Was it necessary for God to grow in grace, that He might rectify His spiritual universe?”<sup>497</sup>

Eddy’s vigorous defence of healing equalled the intensity of nineteenth-century commitment to the salvation of souls, because, for her, they were inseparable.

### *SRJ* and *S&H* in Conversation Concerning Salvation and Healing

As the first known full Christian account of human salvation, from the nature and origin of God to the process of salvation, *SRJ* is a valuable conversation partner with Eddy’s nineteenth-century work. *SRJ*’s theological premise for salvation is that the demonic influence on God’s harmonious realm is fraudulent, and that the Saviour is sent by God to bring back those who fell under the evil influence. Eddy does not present her understanding of salvation in narrative form, but she does see it as a process, rather than a person. For her, divine Principle governs the universe harmoniously and breaks the earthly spell. This ‘spell’ is a belief that one’s harmony is governed by physical conditions, but when people are saved from that mental domination, they are free to understand and experience their original sinlessness and health. Freedom from evil influences brings wholeness of body and soul, healing and salvation. This conversation begins with an exploration of salvation and concludes with a deeper understanding of healing that is contingent on the meaning of salvation.

Both texts weave healing and salvation together so fluidly that is often difficult to discern which topic is under discussion. *SRJ* is an ingenious illustration of healing in synchronisation with salvation and contemporary views of cosmic

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<sup>497</sup> Eddy, *Unity of Good*, 14.

and bodily structure and function. The cause of disease (or sickness or illness), the meaning of wholeness, the struggle, and the final means of deliverance from disease were all microcosmic aspects of the salvation in Christ.<sup>498</sup> Healthy systems governed the body, society, and the afterlife, but the body and society were subject to invasion from higher powers or disruption of balance at any time. The community's social reality was governed by God, as directly as were the health and wholeness of an individual. 'Healing' then was the return to the perfect balance of the divine realm, or recovery of stability with those of the 'immovable race' (discussed in Chapter Four, "God's Realm Beyond Agitation in *SRJ*.").

*SRJ* opens the narrative addressing the community of the immovable race (3:18-4:2), which the author identifies as the kingdom where the supreme God reigns. But evil, as understood in both invasion and imbalance etiologies, has disrupted the harmony of the heavenly realm, and the Saviour is appointed to heal and to save all who wish to return to the immovable race. The Greek word *astheneia* meant both 'weakness' and 'disease' or 'illness,' which implies that the weakness associated with disease was conceived as power struggle in the hierarchical order in the same manner as political oppression or social shaming.

Healing in *S&H*, like healing in *SRJ*, has no meaning independent of its correlation with salvation. Through years of learning Christian salvation from church, study of the Bible, and personal tribulation, Eddy came to see the salvific work of Christ as a reliable, consistent and scientific law, available throughout the ages. Her growing conviction of the mental nature of all human troubles convinced her that the salvation of Christ would resolve all human suffering from sin, sickness, and even death. Healing the sick became more than mere justification of her logic or physical relief; it was the necessity of salvation.

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<sup>498</sup> The totality and universality of salvation from all suffering, sin, and death are emphasised in the final scene of the Saviour's acts (chapters 25-26).

It has been argued that Eddy was a charismatic healer,<sup>499</sup> or that her healing work was quackery.<sup>500</sup> The miracles of Jesus are also largely dismissed as rhetorical legends for believers. To make sense of the ancient records of healing, Pilch argues that modern readers need medical anthropology in order to be rescued from “the tyranny of Western biomedical perspectives.”<sup>501</sup> Regardless of the debates, it is Eddy’s understanding of the correspondence of saving and healing in Jesus’s words and works that supported her confidence in Christ healing. Her long personal journey to health drove her deeper into the Bible, and she attributed the miracle of her mid-life healing from a serious accident to the divine Spirit, which she later “found to be in perfect scientific accord with divine law.”<sup>502</sup> She took seriously Jesus’s commission to his disciples to save the ‘lost sheep of the house of Israel’ and to offer assurance that the Kingdom of heaven was near, or at hand. His charge to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, cleanse the lepers” (*Matt 10:5-8*) encircles the trademark cross and crown on *S&H*, the culmination of her life-work.

### The Importance of Salvation in *SRJ* and *S&H*

Salvation in *S&H* includes release from all forms of worldly power, including the influences that make humans sinful or sick, or victims of injustice.

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<sup>499</sup> Although Setta argues that Eddy was a charismatic leader, she claims Eddy’s self-perception regarding charisma was unclear. Eddy’s stronger position was the universal accessibility of the healing power of Christ. Susan Setta, “Who Does She Think She Is? Analyzing Self-Perceptions of a Charismatic Leader: Mary Baker Eddy through Archival Research,” Unpublished presentation for the *Annual Meeting* (Montreal: Association for the Sociology of Religion, 2006). Also see Richard T. Schaefer and William W. Zellner, *Extraordinary Groups: An Examination of Unconventional Lifestyles*, 8th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2008), 135.

<sup>500</sup> See, for example, Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 59. Also Paul K. Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 245.

<sup>501</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 25.

<sup>502</sup> Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, 24.



But even more than human justice, Eddy defines salvation as the full demonstration of God's being. Her view of what we are saved *from* and *to* is evident in her definitions of 'hell' and 'heaven.' Hell, that from which one must be saved, is: "Mortal belief; error; lust; remorse; hatred; revenge; sin; sickness; death; suffering and self-destruction; self-imposed agony; effects of sin; that which 'worketh abomination or maketh a lie.'"<sup>503</sup> Heaven, that to which one is saved, is: "Harmony; the reign of Spirit; government by divine Principle; spirituality; bliss; the atmosphere of Soul."<sup>504</sup> Thus the importance of salvation in *S&H* lies in the daily relevance of heaven and hell.

Scholars disagree, though, over the level of importance of salvation in *SRJ*. I argue that salvation was equally important in *SRJ*, because as King claims, *SRJ* was composed, translated, and distributed to teach salvation.<sup>505</sup> Some scholars such as Schenke and Arai claim that the placement and infrequency of words related to *soteria* indicate an attempt to Christianise what they see as an otherwise non-Christian text. These words appear only in the framing story in the prologue and postlude, with only a few exceptions,<sup>506</sup> which some argue indicates a possible secondary addition to the text.

Logan and Plese dispute this point.<sup>507</sup> Logan contends that a study of doctrinal content of texts like this one justifies his own supposition "that the form or forms of Gnosticism found in the so-called 'Sethian'\* texts cannot be

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<sup>503</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 588. Her biblical reference is to *Rev* 21:27.

<sup>504</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 588.

<sup>505</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 23.

<sup>506</sup> For example, outside the prologue and postlude, the word ΟΥΣΔΙ, ('save') appears only once in the section where John asks the Saviour a series of questions about the process of *salvation*. The word ΣΩΤΗΡ ('Saviour') appears only once, in the scene in paradise. In this section, the shorter (BG) version uses 'Christ' where 'Saviour' is used in the longer version (NH II): 20:23,24; 21:3; 23:1.

<sup>507</sup> King identifies these four scholars – Hans-Martin Schenke, Sasagu Arai, Alastair Logan, and Zlatko Plese – as exemplary representatives of this debate. King, *Secret Revelation of John*, footnote #1, 358.

understood apart from Christianity,...”<sup>508</sup> His argument is another example<sup>509</sup> of how presumptions of Gnostic heresy produce a red herring and distract readers from the content of the text. Taken at face value, the doctrine put forward by the entire text consistently maintains a message of God’s care for humanity through the work of a God-sent Saviour.

I have adopted this view of *SRJ*’s Christian purpose. Indeed, the word ‘save’ (ΟΥΣΔΙ) appears only six times, the word ‘heal’ (ΤΑΔΔΙ) only once, and salvation not at all in *SRJ*. These terms may appear infrequently because *SRJ*’s message is concerned more with *demonstrating* the motives and means of the saving, healing power of Christ than with defining it. The *SRJ* message of salvation also includes a challenge to the “worldly power” of sickness and offers healing. With further clarification of the meaning of ‘healing’ in *SRJ* later in this chapter, the text will appear as a blueprint for freeing people from discordant bodies of the flesh as well as bodies of social and political order.

The strong emphasis on salvation from human suffering shines through both *SRJ* and *S&H*, but their differences appear in their contrasting etiologies and concepts of disease. *SRJ* is much shorter than *S&H*, and it focuses on demonic motives and behaviour rather than on instructions for the healer. For example, the term ‘sin’ appears only once in *SRJ*, and 530 times in *S&H*; ‘sickness,’ ‘illness,’ and ‘disease’ are not used at all in *SRJ*, but the three terms combined appear 987 times in *S&H*. Specific terminology for sinfulness, such as envy, jealousy, heartlessness, wickedness, empty boasting, and flattery (17: 53-57) is recorded in *SRJ*, because the author is more concerned with the passions that came into being from the demons than with the general notion of sin. Eddy, on the other hand, rarely describes sinful behaviour or symptoms of disease, but she distinctly defines

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<sup>508</sup> Alistair H. B. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy: A Study in the History of Gnosticism* (London: T & T Clark International, 1996), xviii.

<sup>509</sup> The first example was discussed above in Chapter Five, “Docetism Reconsidered.”

causes of sin and disease and usually speaks of them in general terms. The word count is not an accurate assessment of either author's overall message.

Both authors are concerned with causes of suffering and what the suffering means in a salvific context. In *SRJ* the ruler demons, who brought Adam to paradise to eat the fruit of the trees, are of greater concern than the specific type of suffering they caused. They are no less than "an incurable poison and their promise is death" (20:5). Eddy also warns of the secret ways of animal magnetism and its secret wiles, but only occasionally depicts human suffering. Therefore, both authors are deeply concerned with the meaning of suffering in a salvific context, but their means for conveying their messages are significantly different.

#### Salvation and Healing versus Dualism

In Chapter Four I argued that the identification of dualism in extracanonical texts such as *SRJ* and in Eddy's writings is misleading because it is influenced too heavily by an inaccurate association with Platonic dualism. In this section, I argue that the important distinction both authors draw between true and false, or real and counterfeit, is necessary for their theologies of salvation and healing, but they retain non-dualist positions. Two opposing truths would never be reconcilable to Eddy or to the author of *SRJ*, but both admit to a *process* of either awakening or growing understanding, until the single reality of Spirit becomes apparent. Every step in the awakening process involves some measure of healing for both authors. Whereas the destination of the full salvation includes no alternate or opposing power outside of God's supreme Being, healing is a partial view of that ultimate goal, with beliefs in opposing powers fading until they disappear.

Contemporary scholars including Brakke, King, and Pagels identify the struggle between the powers of life and death concerns in the same light as the struggle between the true and false in several extracanonical texts such as *SRJ*. Brakke shows, for example, that *SRJ* “envisions a conflict within and among human beings between the spirit of life, which originates in the entirety, and the counterfeit spirit, which the rulers create to lead human beings astray.”<sup>510</sup> The counterfeit never becomes an ontological reality, but “human beings still needed to be awakened to their true nature and the *reality* of the spiritual realm” (emphasis added).<sup>511</sup> Other examples of this struggle between true/false and life/death concerns include the *Gospel of Philip* and *Treatise on the Resurrection*. The *Gospel of Philip* raises questions of resurrection and baptism, such as whether everyone will be ‘born again’ in baptism, or whether such baptised people were symbolically or truly ‘raised from the dead’ when they awakened to the spiritual life. Similarly, the Christian student of antiquity, Rheginos, wondered in *Treatise on the Resurrection* whether resurrection is real if it does not involve the human body. The anonymous teacher’s reply drives Christian logic on reality to its utmost test:

...do not think the resurrection is an illusion. It is no illusion, but it is the truth! Indeed, it is more fitting to say the world is an illusion, rather than the resurrection, which has come into being through our Lord the Savior, Jesus Christ (48:10-19).<sup>512</sup>

The authors of these texts push the question of reality beyond the physical senses, to the knowledge or experience of eternal life. There is no opposite or temporary being, contrary to spiritual life. Readers of other texts, such as the *Gospel of Matthew*, were familiar with the notion of the body’s relationship to reality and deception. For instance, Jesus warned against the role of the deceiver as an

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<sup>510</sup> Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 69.

<sup>511</sup> Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 69.

<sup>512</sup> Elaine Pagels and Karen L. King, *Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Early Christianity* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007), 86.

opponent to his mission “For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and they will lead many astray” (*Matt 24:5*).

Eddy was also concerned with the deception of the appearance of life in sin and sickness, but her arguments appealed more directly to the logic of nineteenth-century science. Even though both *SRJ* and *S&H* authors refer to the distortion of evil as a counterfeit and relate the deception to life-and-death concerns, Eddy uses terms such as ‘divine Principle’ as a synonym for God to indicate the reliable, scientific system of God’s order and control. This eternal, invisible Principle or Logos was inseparable from what it governed, just as the principle of mathematics could not be disconnected from the numbers it governs. Without the human perception of this higher law growing to a greater understanding, human thought would be unable to withdraw from the *appearance* of life in sin and sickness. The *false* sense of life experiencing discord does not make two opposite truths possible (such as the opposing views from the sun and earth).

The more traditional nineteenth-century arguments against Dualism which arose in response to material theories of humanity, contradicted the basis for Christian healing by conferring a separate reality on the world of empirical perception. Nineteenth-century scientific endeavours, such as Darwin’s theory of evolution and its argument for biological origins, agitated theological boundaries just as violently as Eddy’s challenge to materialism itself. When human freedom and intelligence were threatened, the materialists’ theory of mind-body (or body-soul) dualism offered some comfort. Theological and biological versions of the human condition could be reconciled by granting that the human *body* might have evolved from animals, but the *soul* would remain safely in God’s domain. Such dualism in Christian thought has long been problematic, though, because it pits the body against the Spirit.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Nancey Murphy, "Science and Society," pages 99-131 in *Witness: Systematic Theology*, ed.

To some, Eddy's commitment to God's sovereign power and to the infinitude of Spirit (another synonym for God) appears to fall into the same dualist trap. Her teaching that matter is diametrically opposed to Spirit appears to justify hatred of the body. However, such a view mistakes her underlying principle of Christian healing. Unlike the dualism of Plato or Descartes, Eddy's acknowledgement of the 'dual personality' of the eternal Christ and corporeal Jesus indicates why her theology does *not* attempt to reconcile two opposite positions. It was a *temporary* necessity that the human mind held onto the material and visible concept, but only until it was ready to relinquish it for the eternal reality of Christ. She argued that whereas the invisible Christ was imperceptible to the human senses, Jesus appeared as a bodily existence. This dual personality of the eternal Christ and the corporeal Jesus manifest in the flesh continued until his ascension.<sup>514</sup>

### The Means of Salvation

Whereas *SRJ* is the first Christian writing that tells the entire story of salvation, *S&H* was informed by eighteen hundred years of theological speculation on the subject. *SRJ*'s Saviour fulfills a variety of salvific identities and roles, whereas in *S&H*, the teaching of atonement responds to the Christian history of salvation theology. One possible explanation for the 'Saviour' title located at the beginning and end of *SRJ* is to emphasise that the Saviour acts differently according to the situation. Other 'Saviours' in *SRJ* – Christ, the luminous Reflection-Epinoia, Pronoia, Sophia, and Eve – seem sometimes to be the same divine person, but with slightly differing characteristics. "The alliance among and overlapping identities of these figures," Taussig explains, "do not

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James Wm. McClendon, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 124-5.

<sup>514</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 334.

occur just in this text, but also in other texts from Nag Hammadi and even in other unrelated ancient literature and statuary.” He acknowledges *SRJ*’s indebtedness to Jewish literature, for instance, with the presence of the female salvific figure of ‘Wisdom’ (Sophia) in Wisdom literature:<sup>515</sup>

Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus the paths of those on earth were set right and people were taught what pleases you, and were saved by wisdom (*Wisdom* 9:17-18).

Each expression of salvation throughout the text deepens the meaning of the term. ‘Christ,’ ‘Saviour,’ or ‘Lord’ is the teacher, explaining the process of salvation. Pronoia, a common second-century word in philosophical and psychological speculations,<sup>516</sup> foresees God’s plan for salvation and sends the appropriate help. Epinoia, a second-century psychological term, corrects conceptions of the Divine realm with light or reflection.<sup>517</sup> Sophia’s repentance returning her to her original state, put her in a position to do battle with the counterfeit spirit in the Jewish sense of saving Wisdom;<sup>518</sup> Eve is not the cause of humanity’s fall, but of its redemption by revealing to Adam his own spiritual essence.<sup>519</sup> The role of the ‘Saviour’ who appears in the introductory and concluding parts of the story, is therefore amplified by these further distinguishing aspects of salvific work. Although the author of *SRJ* consciously responds to contemporary philosophical questions, he positions the Christian Saviour as the pastoral antidote to the oppressive forces of the times.

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<sup>515</sup> Hal Taussig, *A New New Testament: A Bible for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 465.

<sup>516</sup> Davies, *Secret Book of John*, 22.

<sup>517</sup> Davies, *Secret Book of John*, 108.

<sup>518</sup> Taussig, *New New Testament*, 465.

<sup>519</sup> Taussig, *New New Testament*, 466.

The terms ‘atonement,’ ‘reconciliation,’ and ‘propitiation’ occur only rarely in the New Testament,<sup>520</sup> but from Augustine through Eddy’s near contemporary Schleiermacher, many theories of atonement gained hold in Christian thought. Comparing Eddy’s views of atonement with the most influential Western doctrines up to her time clarifies her teaching of the means of salvation. Anselm’s ‘satisfaction theory,’ for example, does not allow humanity to experience the goodness of the image and likeness of God.<sup>521</sup> Abelard’s ‘moral influence theory’ gives Jesus no redemptive power.<sup>522</sup> Aquinas’s ‘objective atonement,’ based on Anselm’s satisfaction theory, honours Christ, but does not empower humanity to heal.<sup>523</sup> Scotus’s ‘subjective theory’ successfully quiets the human mind, but does not indicate how divine Love heals the human mind.<sup>524</sup> Luther’s ‘justification by faith’ gives humans the grace needed for redemption, but does not support the responsibility of compliance with it.<sup>525</sup> Calvin’s ‘substitution theory’ – the direct teaching passed on to Eddy in the Congregationalist church, and which deeply disturbed her – led to limited, exclusive atonement.<sup>526</sup> Kant’s ‘extreme subjective atonement’ rejects the atonement of Jesus with its absoluteness of moral consciousness.<sup>527</sup> Schleiermacher’s modern reinstatement of the doctrine

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<sup>520</sup> ‘Atonement’ never occurs, but *katallagēn* (reconciliation) occurs only in Romans 5:11, and *ilaskomai* (propitiation) occurs only in Hebrews 2:17.

<sup>521</sup> Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 135-6.

<sup>522</sup> Joe R. Jones, *A Grammar of Christian Faith: Systematic Explorations in Christian Life and Doctrine*. vol. 2. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 433.

<sup>523</sup> McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 138.

<sup>524</sup> Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, second ed (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 64-5.

<sup>525</sup> McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 186.

<sup>526</sup> McGrath. *Iustitia Dei*, 118-9.

<sup>527</sup> McGrath. *Iustitia Dei*, 149.



of reconciliation rejects the teaching and example of Jesus as necessary aspects of redemption.<sup>528</sup>

For Eddy genuine transformation can take place only through the atonement that reconciles man to God. She reasoned, “The atonement of Christ reconciles man to God, not God to man; for the divine Principle of Christ is God, and how can God propitiate Himself?”<sup>529</sup> Although atonement is a hard problem in theology, suffering is regarded as “an error of sinful sense which Truth destroys,” and “eventually both sin and suffering will fall at the feet of everlasting Love.”<sup>530</sup> The blame for both sin and suffering, therefore, lies with the ‘error of sinful sense,’ not with the child of God’s creation. Eddy’s fourth tenet of CS summarises her views on the efficacy of Jesus’s atonement:

We acknowledge Jesus’ atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man’s unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.<sup>531</sup>

If we are truly saved from sin by Jesus’s atonement, she reasons, then we must also be saved from sickness. The meaning of sickness will be discussed more fully later in this chapter, but it is essential to understand the importance of healing the sick through atonement (at-one-ment with God) in order to fully understand Eddy’s sense of salvation.

### Salvation (and Healing) Requiring the Separation of Evil from Good

In *SRJ*, the separation of evil from good forms the basis for salvation, and Eddy addresses the same issue for the purpose of teaching salvation, but from a

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<sup>528</sup> McGrath. *Iustitia Dei*, 155-6.

<sup>529</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 18.

<sup>530</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 23.

<sup>531</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 497.

different perspective. Each salvific act of separating evil from good is the means by which humans experience healing during the unfoldment of the full salvation. First, evil must be *distinguished* from good, and then it can be removed, as Eddy argues in her exegesis on Jesus's parable of the weeds and wheat (or 'tares and wheat,' discussed a few paragraphs later). Distinguishing evil from good addresses dualism from another angle. In *SRJ*, Sophia, the rather complex figure known throughout ancient religious and philosophical culture, plays a central role in conveying *SRJ*'s treatment of good and evil. I argue that in this case, she demonstrates the falsity of a power apart from God, and her salvific role is to enlighten those who have been taken in by the false voices of alien authorities. Although Eddy never personalises wisdom as Sophia, she does argue that the unreality of a falsity must be acknowledged.

Some historic context may help explain Sophia's role in *SRJ* as a Saviour (or healer). Her identity as an anthropomorphic figure in the Old Testament, Apocryphal writings, extracanonical, and Greek writings indicates her importance in a variety of cultural settings. In Jewish Wisdom literature, such as *Prov* (8:27-30), Sophia is associated with the Logos, or the female expression of the Word/Logos in the Prologue of John's Gospel (*John* 1:1-5); and Schüssler Fiorenza argues that Jesus could be identified as one of the children of Sophia-God.<sup>532</sup> In general, Sophia's authority stemmed from her presumed existence prior to God's creation of the cosmos, and she was the means by which God accomplished creation. She was always in the company of God in *Prov* (8:30,31, for example),<sup>533</sup> and in both *Proverbs* and *Sirach*, she was personified as God's wisdom made known to humans. And specifically in the apocryphal *Book of*

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<sup>532</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, Tenth Anniversary Edition (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 132.

<sup>533</sup> Christine Roy Yoder, "Proverbs," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 235.

*Wisdom*, she was in both creation and human affairs.<sup>534</sup> The Sophia who appears most frequently in post-New Testament writings, however, appears more closely associated with a demiurge myth, and this portrayal is often lumped together with other earlier images in such a way that Sophia's identity and role are suspect wherever they are found.

These portrayals of Wisdom/Sophia in *SRJ* raise questions concerning the consistency of her identity. How can Wisdom, always in the company of God, be responsible for creation of the world as we know it, a world of brokenness and sin? All was at peace until Sophia willfully and ignorantly produced an offspring on her own, without the consent of the Father/Mind. Her motives and actions are a direct mockery of the 'knowledge' given to humanity by Wisdom. Since she is best known in other literature for her constancy *with* God from the beginning, the image of her independent action signals the reader that this behaviour is the exact opposite of her true identity. It was not 'wise' for Wisdom to have willed something either in ignorance or in willful disobedience to the divine order. All the intentions and actions of Sophia's bastard offspring reveal its evil but impotent opposition to the Father-Mother of the perfect realm.

The key feature of the story that brings clarity to these issues for me is the author's repeated demonstration of the falsity of the claims of evil. When the misdeed is exposed, Sophia is present with the human world, and she demonstrates through *wisdom* that repentance is the means for response to the Saviour. Her role, then, as God's gift to humanity, is established. Since the struggle for stability and peace takes place in the noetic realm – between the knowledge of truth and the counterfeit, hypnotic suggestions of the jealous enemy – the false claims have been exposed for what they are.

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<sup>534</sup> Michael Kolarcik, S.J., "The Book of Wisdom: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 447.

Another perspective on Sophia's role in *SRJ* is derived from her similarity to the Sophia portrayed in Valentinian myths.<sup>535</sup> Thomassen's identification of two versions of Sophia in the Valentinian myths sheds light on the contradictory characteristics of Sophia in *SRJ* (both wise and disobedient). While I do not find such distinct entities in *SRJ*, I do think this proposal is helpful for identifying the opposing natures in the Sophia of *SRJ*. A division takes place between Sophia herself and her desire, Thomassen claims, producing two Sophias. One of them remains with God, and the other is abandoned by Christ. The second Sophia remains in an earthly way, in the same way Jesus abandoned his body on the cross. But the spiritual seed, or offspring of this Sophia, are spiritual beings, who return to the Pleroma (the original heavenly realm), where the 'healing of the deficiency' (22:36) becomes complete. Thomassen describes the detachment of spirit and matter (in the Valentinian texts): "Christ's abandonment of Sophia thus means that the spirit and matter are detached from one another in the protogonic process, in the same way as Christ left his body behind on the cross after his salvific incarnation in the world was accomplished."<sup>536</sup>

Although the crucifixion motif is not present in *SRJ*, Sophia appears to serve as 'the agent separating spirit and matter.' Her 'unwise' act of disobedience led her to the creation of a grotesque offspring, and finally filled her with the passion of regret. Matter, the "mother of all demon-created passions" (17:38-47) opposes the tranquility of the Spirit world, and the Saviour reunites those who have been severed from the original world of Spirit. Rather than two distinct Sophia entities in *SRJ*, I find that one portrayal of her is true, and the other is the

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<sup>535</sup> Valentinian and Sethian Gnosticism are two of the largest scholarly categories of Gnosticism, representing ancient schools of thought that share many characteristics and diverge in other ways. *SRJ* is usually associated with Sethian literature because of the role of Seth and Seth's seed in the text, but Pétremont also notes *SRJ*'s link with the Valentinian myth of Sophia who gave birth to a being known as the 'demiurge,' or craftsman of the sensible world. See Simone Pétremont, *A Separate God: The Christian Origins of Gnosticism*. trans. Carol Harrison (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 89.

<sup>536</sup> Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the 'Valentinians'* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 259.

intentional counterfeit, designed to teach the impotence of falsity. Evil is therefore separated from the realm of good by its exposure as the *supposed* opposite of the divine realm.

By arguing the unreality of falsity, Eddy teaches the basic law that undergirds salvation and healing. “Truth never mingles with error,” she explains, and therefore “Truth is able to cast out the ills of the flesh.”<sup>537</sup> Either God created and maintains the image and likeness of God, or else the material evidence from our senses confirmed the opposite of God, or at least evidence of God’s weakened capacity. Eddy argued this point repeatedly; it formed the foundation of her systematic theology. The logic lies on the side of science for her: “The Science of being repudiates self-evident impossibilities, such as the amalgamation of Truth and error in cause or effect. Science separates the tares and wheat in time of harvest.”<sup>538</sup> Both Eddy and the author of *SRJ* approach the problem of the appearance of the amalgamation of good and evil quite differently, but they insist on the separation in defence of their healing theology.

As has been noted, the evidence from human sight (in viewing the sun) is exactly the opposite of the calculated perspective of the sun and its ‘view’ of the earth. Separating the false view of it from the correct view, the viewer discerns the practical and harmonious view. Eddy taught that since

God *said* [presumably through the Word<sup>539</sup>], Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (Gen 1:26 KJV<sup>540</sup>),

we have the right to experience this goodness in healing and in full salvation.

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<sup>537</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 191.

<sup>538</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 207.

<sup>539</sup> If God used words or ‘Word’ to create, this idea is consistent with *John* 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

<sup>540</sup> KJV used in keeping with nineteenth-century standard.

## *SRJ* and *S&H* Conversation Concerning Healing

The conversation now moves from salvation to healing, because salvation theology grounds the theology of healing. Salvation, according to *SRJ* and *S&H*, requires gradual human progress leading up to the full at-one-ment with God. Healing – of mind, soul, and body – is the practical and relevant way to make this journey. Three topics that explain the meaning of healing most clearly in conversation with these texts are (1) the causes and source of illness, (2) the importance of unwavering faith, and (3) the value of the body.

### The Causes and Source of Illness

Disease and healing in antiquity are incomprehensible within the context of Western medicine. “Modern Western investigators must suspend their biomedical understandings and assumptions in reading the Gospel,” Pilch confirms.<sup>541</sup> The same hermeneutic of suspicion must apply to other texts about healing from antiquity, including *SRJ*. Specifically, the notion of demonic control over bodily functions may be difficult for modern readers, possibly because we are more accustomed to relating mental (rather than physical) disturbances to outside influences. But demons were ubiquitous in antiquity, in religious and non-religious belief, because they represented the source of control or power over all aspects of life.<sup>542</sup>

It is fitting for the drama of *SRJ* to focus on the cosmic battle for control over human souls and bodies. Detailed lists record what demons created and governed; the longer version of *SRJ* adds the specific names of demons that govern

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<sup>541</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 76.

<sup>542</sup> The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:2 entry on *δαίμων* includes: “...especially in the tragic dramatists, it denotes d. ‘anything which overtakes man,’ such as destiny, or death, or any good or evil fortune.”

body parts, material qualities, and passions so the healer can overpower them and cast them out. The additional portion in the longer version includes an ancient conception of the human body, “a composite, made up of both physical (material) and psychic (soul) substances, a view common in antiquity.”<sup>543</sup> This ‘composite’ is essential for understanding healing in antiquity, since the Saviour addresses demonic identity and activity, not bodily symptoms alone. The only named diseases in *SRJ* are ‘pain,’ “agitation,” ‘anguish,’ and so forth, and the body parts are mentioned because they are susceptible to demonic influences. Stoic philosophers were also concerned with passions and their capacity to wreak havoc with the human mind and body. But the Stoic and the *SRJ* approaches to the control of passions differed in their views of the role of demons. Stoics strove to control inner thoughts through the will, while the author of *SRJ* sought the Saviour’s authority to denounce external impositions on thought.<sup>544</sup>

Eddy also addressed the identification of the source of human suffering, but for the purpose of gaining control over those mentalities that produce suffering and sorrows and turning them toward the governing Principle, God. Her theology was as dependent on the authority of Christ as was *SRJ*, but for her, Christ’s work was to drain the human consciousness of its false beliefs and to turn it in the God-oriented direction. Demons – more distinctly conceived as ‘evil spirits,’ or simply ‘evil’ – were conceived as false powers which cause human misery by manipulating human thought; and in this view their role was quite similar to the demons of *SRJ*. Both theological systems were based on the logic of perfect creation, imposition of external disruption, and Christ’s salvific power of

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<sup>543</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 115.

<sup>544</sup> The discussion of Stoic beliefs in disease and its cure was in Chapter Five, “Second Century: Passions and Demons.”

restoration. But reading the two works together highlights Eddy's emphasis on the participation of the 'patient,' or the individual seeking help.

Eddy acknowledged the difficulty of doubting evil spirits, especially when they feel like one's own senses, but the proper alignment with God's harmonious government shifts both mind and body, which *feels* like a healing to those who experience it. She taught that while mortals cannot see from the Mind of God, they can understand the basis on which God could *claim* the reality of good and omnipotence. They can also understand how the perspective from the material senses (the brain) would be the exact opposite of God's position.<sup>545</sup> The sun-earth relationship discussed in Chapter Five metaphorically illustrates the way healing can be dependent on the perception, or *sense*, of reality. Roman Catholics traditionally hold that due to the sins of Adam and Eve, harmony with creation is broken and creation is consequently subject to its bondage to decay.<sup>546</sup> All humans are thereby implicated in Adam's sin.<sup>547</sup> Some contemporary theologians acknowledge that the stories of *Gen 1-3* accounting for human sinfulness are neither possible nor desirable, but the question behind the doctrine of original sin remains: "why are humans not good?"<sup>548</sup>

Eddy questioned the doctrine of original sin from a different perspective, based on her view of a Biblical God who does not sin, does not succumb to sickness or disease, and does not die: "How can humans discover their original

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<sup>545</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 479.

<sup>546</sup> U.S. Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church with Modifications from the Editio Typica*, (New York: Doubleday, 1995), paragraph 400.

<sup>547</sup> U.S. Catholic Church, *Catechism*, paragraph 402.

<sup>548</sup> Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 204-5.



good?” In order for the image and likeness of God to resemble God, the individual must challenge his or her own physical senses in favour of the ‘Science’<sup>549</sup> of being:

The evidence of the physical senses often reverses the real Science of being, and so creates a reign of discord, — assigning seeming power to sin, sickness, and death; but the great facts of Life, rightly understood, defeat this triad of errors, contradict their false witnesses, and reveal the kingdom of heaven, — the actual reign of harmony on earth.<sup>550</sup>

The Saviour’s work in correcting perceptions is, therefore, for Eddy a life-or-death issue that brings healing into the context of salvation.

### The Importance of Unwavering Faith

The authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* dwell on the frame of mind of those who exercise authority over demons, whether they cause fear or other agitating forms of human suffering. In both cases, they express unwavering, unshakable faith. The phrase in *SRJ*, ‘generation which does not waver,’ presents a vivid image of the ideal relationship between God and God’s ‘immovable’ people.<sup>551</sup> This generation/race/people differs from other people because they will no longer be shaken; they have received the spirit that comes from the imperishable world. The demons were responsible for ‘shaking,’ agitating, or stirring of passions, which in turn caused disease of both body and soul,<sup>552</sup> so the Saviour’s commission was to overcome the dominance of these ruling demons: “I traveled into the vastness of the dark, and I persevered until I entered the midst of the prison. And the foundations of *chaos* quaked” 6:5-7. The Saviour successfully returned suffering

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<sup>549</sup> Eddy explains the special capitalisation employed for ‘Science:’ “In divine Science all belongs to God, for God is All; hence the propriety of giving unto His holy name due deference, — the capitalization which distinguishes it from all other names, thus obeying the leading of our Lord’s Prayer.” Eddy, *Miscellany*, 225.

<sup>550</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 122.

<sup>551</sup> God’s ‘immovable generation’ was explained in greater detail in Chapter Four, “God’s Realm Beyond Agitation in *SRJ*.”

<sup>552</sup> See further elaboration: King, *Secret Revelation of John*, ix, 200. Also, Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 109.

humanity back to the original *immovable* race: “I am ... the one who raises you to the place of honor...Fortify yourself against the angels of poverty and the *demons of chaos* and all those who ensnare you.” (26:27,30). Those who return to this original state of harmony are ‘healed.’

Eddy’s similar expression of the unwavering frame of mind is exhibited in steady faith, or trustworthiness. It cannot be shaken, because it depends entirely on the foundation of God’s reality and power. She rebukes blind faith based on ignorance. In contrast, the trustworthy fidelity she commends is not in tension with her understanding of science, because scientists of all fields have a degree of faith while basing their faith on knowledge. “Many scientists believe in things that cannot be seen or detected,” Rau observes, “because theory and the available evidence require it.”<sup>553</sup> ‘Dark matter’ is an example of something most scientists believe exists, though it has never been detected with any scientific instrument. For Eddy, the reality of Science is comprised of God’s perfect kingdom and God’s government of it. Her defence of the role of faith in spiritual law is based on the following distinction she discerns between faith expressed in *trustfulness* and faith expressed as *trustworthiness*:

One kind of faith trusts one’s welfare to others. Another kind of faith understands divine Love and how to work out one’s “own salvation, with fear and trembling.” “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!” expresses the helplessness of a blind faith; whereas the injunction, “Believe . . . and thou shalt be saved!” demands self-reliant trustworthiness, which includes spiritual understanding and confides all to God.<sup>554</sup>

The difference between the two determines success or failure in healing.

Samples of her healing work supply evidence of her own achievement of unwavering trust, such as the following account from ‘a lady in Lynn:’

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<sup>553</sup> Rau, *Mapping the Originals Debate*, 188.

<sup>554</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 23. Eddy’s biblical references are *Phil 2:12*, *Mark 9:24* and *Acts 16:31*.

My little son, one year and a half old, was a great sufferer from disease of the bowels, until he was reduced to almost a skeleton, and growing worse constantly; ... At that time the physicians had given him up, ... but you came in one morning, took him up from the cradle in your arms, kissed him, laid him down again and went out. In less than an hour he called for his playthings, got up and appeared quite well. All his symptoms changed at once. ... Immediately after you saw him, he ate all he wanted, ...

There's more to this last healing than appeared in the first edition of *Science and Health*. When Mrs. Glover [Eddy's name at that time] came to the home, she also found not only the woman's husband confined to his bed with rheumatism but a little daughter who was deaf. By the time she left the house, less than half an hour after she had arrived, both of these cases had been healed too.

Many years later Mrs. Eddy told one of her students about this experience, which prompted the question, "When will we be able to do work like that?" Looking off in the distance, Mrs. Eddy replied, "It is Love that heals, only Love!" The student, Miss Nemi Robertson, repeated the question, "But when will we be able to do such work?" This time her teacher looked directly at her and said quietly, "When you believe what you say. I believe every statement of Truth that I make."<sup>555</sup>

'Believing' every statement of Truth is an example of what she meant by trustworthy faith. Learning to heal, she teaches, requires the same spiritual devotion and commitment as "working out one's own salvation."<sup>556</sup> This nearly hagiographic portrait of Eddy should be nuanced however, with the acknowledgement that she also experienced her own struggles, as for example when she feared a relapse of her recovery from the accident on the icy sidewalk and when she withdrew for a while to recover after the sudden passing of her husband, Asa Eddy. In the midst of such human trouble, the authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* teach that an unshakable, unwavering faith is a prerequisite to the power of healing and return to harmony.

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<sup>555</sup> von Fettweis, *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer (Amplified)*, 100-101. The source for the account of the healing of the baby is from Mary Baker Glover, *Science and Health*, first edition (Boston, MA: The Christian Scientist Publishing Company, 1875), 353. The source for the additional healings on that day is from Helen A. Nixon reminiscences. The recollection of the conversation with Nemi Robertson is from John Randall Dunn reminiscences. These documents are available courtesy of The Mary Baker Eddy Library in Boston, MA.

<sup>556</sup> Eddy frequently referred to this quote from Paul, *Phil 2:12*.

## Body

One of the most provocative elements of the theology of healing in both *SRJ* and *S&H* is the meaning of the body. It has been identified as the ‘battlefield’ upon which powers fight for authority in Chapters Four and Five. One of the classic clichés used to identify ‘gnostic’ heresy is the presumed hatred of the body.<sup>557</sup> No wonder the basic meaning of the Greek *soma* remains enigmatic. Generally speaking, in antiquity it meant ‘body’ such as the object of a physician’s care. In Plato, it also denoted a single whole that is self-contained, where the totality of one’s being consisted of the soul along with the integrated body. The cosmos, held in kinship with the human body as a living unit, was the pattern, or macrocosmic aspect of a human body. Because Aristotle conceived the body as precedent to the soul, *soma* (body) ultimately came to represent the physically present ‘person.’ Later, Stoics maintained the continuity of soul and body, but the body was disparaged, as it defiled the divine soul.<sup>558</sup>

But rather than harbouring resentment toward the body, theologies such as *SRJ* and *S&H*, usually emphasise *healing* the body instead. Therefore it is impossible to comprehend the meaning of healing in these theologies when there is a presumption of a hatred of the body or desire to escape it. The authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* treat the body as a temporary holding unit where salvation is gradually experienced. Paul’s teaching that our bodies belong to God for the purpose of glorifying God supports the healing objective: “For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” (*1 Cor. 6:20*). Healing the body, then, is treasured as evidence of the presence of Christ in the salvific work. The healing objective does not embrace beauty and health for its own sake, but for the glory of God until the body is no longer needed.

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<sup>557</sup> For discussion of both of these views, See Chapter Five, “Docetism Reconsidered.”

<sup>558</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. *σῶμα*, vol. 7, 1028, 1029, 1031, 1043.

With this explanation, the existence of the human body understood in a psychic sense in *SRJ* that precedes matter, carries more meaning. A body controlled by external forces is naturally subject to the weakness or strength of the powers that claim it; in fact, it is the battleground on which the powers meet in combat, as mentioned in Chapters Four and Five. The terms *psuche* and *psuchikos*, usually translated as ‘soul’ and ‘psychic’ in New Testament times and in the larger Greek world a couple of centuries later were ambiguous, representing the two sides of a person’s nature or the evidence of two power sources. The *somatikos* (bodily), *ulikos* (material), and *choikos* (earthly) conveyed “the physical life which is proper to everyone, where the decisive thing is added only by the Spirit of God;” but *noeros* (comprehending) and *pneumatikos* (spiritual) express the “true life which God has given, ... which will last into eternity ... that which belongs to the soul, or indeed its exaltation above the purely bodily.”<sup>559</sup>

The author of *SRJ* paints a vivid image of the *psychic* which is governed by either the spiritual or devilishly material power. Yaldabaoth’s initial attempt to imitate the perfect Adam expresses the ambiguous aspects of *psuchikos* (psychic): ‘goodness,’ ‘divinity,’ and ‘understanding’ participate in the work of creation (15:20-27). But soon the demons “are in the whole body” (17:38), and finally matter gains control. “The mother of all these [the demons]... is matter” (17:47).<sup>560</sup> The passions known as grief, pleasure, desire, and fear are released from the demons, and the creature becomes subject to envy, suffering, pain, wickedness, anger, insatiable greed, panic, and shame (17:54-57). True to the psychic ambiguity, “these all resemble virtues as well as vices” (17:58), as the “angels and demons labored until they had created the psychic body” (17:64).

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<sup>559</sup> This definition goes on to mention that this meaning is found in the Septuagint and “sometimes in Gnosticism.” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. *ψυχικός*, vol. 9, 661-662.

<sup>560</sup> As in *S&H*, ‘matter’ is distinguished from the body, in that matter is one of the states of conscious identity: material, psychic (or ‘human’), and spiritual. ‘Body’ is the all-encompassing self that ‘houses’ the warfare between these three phases.

However, at this point, the counterfeit god's failure becomes increasingly apparent, because his creation of the 'psychic and material body' remains lifeless until *Pneuma* (Spirit), -- retrieved from the Mother's connection with the Invisible Spirit -- is breathed into him (18:7-11).

The body now consists of three aspects along a spectrum, the *sarx* (flesh), *psuche* (psychic), and *pneuma* (spirit); and the battle for control over the body rages between the two creators -- Invisible Spirit via *nous* (Mind) versus the jealous counterfeit spirit via demons. Human bodies are battlegrounds "between the true and counterfeit spirits, fighting the contest between reality and deception."<sup>561</sup> Until the Saviour frees them from the *sarx* and *psyche* they will suffer the effects of Yaldabaoth's control emotionally and bodily.<sup>562</sup> This three-fold depiction of the body was not as strange to the second-century reader as it is to our modern notions.<sup>563</sup>

Eddy addressed the difficulty of distinguishing between the purpose of the body and the immersion in materialism by encouraging her students to be modest with their claims and patient with their growth. "Emerge gently from matter into Spirit. Think not to thwart the spiritual ultimate of all things, but come naturally into Spirit through better health and morals and as the result of spiritual growth."<sup>564</sup> She counselled against the overzealous attempt to denounce all forms of materialism in human thought until they could *demonstrate* what they understood.

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<sup>561</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 121.

<sup>562</sup> A New Testament example of the use of *psuchikos* indicates a similar use of the term in the second century. Paul writes, "Now the natural man (*psuchikos*) doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, and he can't know them, because they are spiritually discerned" *1 Cor* 2:14, WEB. Here *psuyhikos* is neutrally the 'natural' man without the eschatological gift of the *pneuma* (Spirit) and he belongs to the world, not to God.

<sup>563</sup> Again, Paul distinguishes people in the same three categories for the purpose of spelling out the need for their spiritual growth: the spiritual, the natural (or, unspiritual), and the fleshly (*1 Cor* 2:13-3:1).

<sup>564</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 485.

Even in her defence of the unreality of matter, she argues the importance of the care of the body. It is a question of degree because we can negate disease more readily than the sum of all that the material senses affirm. Jesus, her ‘great Exemplar,’ did not require the last step to be taken first. He restored the diseased body to its normal action, and “he presented his *material* body absolved from death and the grave.”<sup>565</sup> The body should glorify God who loves and blesses until all aspects of materialism have been dissolved in the full salvation.

### Observations from the Conversation on Theme Three

A critical conversation on the correlation of healing and salvation involves the *readers* of the texts as well as the authors, because both authors appear to expect their readers will experience healing and salvation. Some readers were probably faithful Christians or curious seekers; others theologians or Greek philosophers; and still others, detractors. But Eddy’s stated targeted audience consisted of ‘seekers’ who seek both truth and healing. “Dear reader,…” she often wrote in her books, indicating her compassion for those who needed encouragement and help. The author of *SRJ* structured his narrative’s message by sending his protagonist out to give it to those seeking their saviour as he had done.

Unlike the author of *SRJ* who reports the personal voice of the Saviour, however, Eddy positions herself as a direct teacher for her readers, addressing them in the second person. *SRJ* readers are slightly removed from the role of the patient, or person experiencing sin or sickness, as they hear the story of healing and salvation mostly from the perspective of the narrator and Saviour, who (usually) speak of saved or healed people in the third person. But because *SRJ* is a narrative within another narrative, *SRJ* readers may also identify with John the

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<sup>565</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Christian Science Sentinel* (12 October 1899), 104.

disciple of Jesus, who is instructed by the Saviour in the overall revelation. The account begins with John's confusion and fear – specific passions that second-century men and women dreaded (2:3-14). By the conclusion of the revelation, John had been healed of his passions and was prepared to deliver the message of salvation to others. The author may have intended Christians to identify with John as a willing disciple, seeking to understand how to be healed and to heal.

*SRJ* readers might have known more about the actions and motives of their Saviour, and derive hope from them, whereas *S&H* readers might have understood how to heal more explicitly. It is possible the authors conceived nuanced differences in the relationships between evil, Christ, and the individual who is healed and saved, but they both envisioned the role of the Saviour as the one who awakens their readers – or 'patients' – out of the illusive error of their suffering.

## Concluding Observations for Part Two

Conversing with a text in a foreign language brings the reader into its history and cultural environment, as well as its unique purpose, so the God of *SRJ* remains a foreign image to me. I will never be forced to seek God's salvation through martyrdom, for example. Spiritualism and free-love may be modified in a New Age kind of culture, and their feminist appeal and influence on Puritan morals leave a mark on my twenty-first-century daily life.

But beneath the strange influences of cultural expressions, I am shocked to discover continuity in the ontological relationship between God and God's creation, including humanity. Both authors convey an idea I can appreciate in the twenty-first century: awakening to a spiritual reality in order to regain a sense of health, peace, and well-being in the face of human trauma and oppression. Despite the strange (to me) second-century fusion of gender and saviours and



nineteenth-century Puritan austerity, I discern in both texts a secure confidence in God's presence and power. The God in *SRJ* resembles the God I recognise in *S&H* who awakens humanity from false (or counterfeit) attractions, sorrows, and sensations of the world and into a peaceful awareness of God's love and power.

## Part Three: Twenty-First-Century Engagement

In Part Three, I take on several roles in my engagement with the themes of this critical conversation. First, I enter the conversation as the third ‘text’ in Chapter Seven. Then in Chapter Eight, I will be the outside observer of a conversation between the texts and modern mainline Christian worldviews; and in Chapter Nine I will draw conclusions from all the conversations. As the third ‘text’ in Chapter Seven, I maintain my epistemological worldview, draw on my healing experience, and consider key variables from my twenty-first-century life experience. In Chapter Eight, I will then reverse my role and take the perspectival view as I set up a conversation between the texts and more typical contemporary Christian worldviews. My concluding remarks will draw on the highlights that emerge from the full conversation.

### Chapter Seven: My Twenty-First-Century Engagement with *SRJ* and *S&H*

As a ‘text’ in Chapter Seven, I address all three themes as a conversation partner and in a critically reflexive mode. But first I will address a couple of general topics that relate to my twenty-first-century engagement with these themes. First is an acknowledgement that the meaning of the term ‘healing’ shifts from one culture to another. Second I need to address a question about the relationship between *SRJ* and *S&H*: How did similar ideas emerge as revelation to

these two authors who had no knowledge of each other, and what does that coincidence mean for me as a twenty-first century reader?

Then I will address my relationship to the three themes. In theme one – the healing characteristics of God – I recognise how recent interpretations of quantum mechanics have opened a new vista on the subject of God as Mind, but without disturbing my worldview. In theme two, I recognise the fluctuating guise of evil presenting itself in the twenty-first century as terrorism and victimisation but still subject to the greater power of God. The third theme – the correlation between healing and salvation – probes the relationship between my healing practice and my understanding of my own salvation.

## General Twenty-First-Century Topics

The conversation between the earlier two texts helps me distinguish between culturally dependent phenomena and ideas that still appear relevant in an ageless manner. As I add my twenty-first-century experience to the conversation, this knowledge helps me identify the enduring ideas applicable to my contemporary culture. Language can be a good bridge between what fluctuates and what remains. When I first read *SRJ*, some key words caught my attention, because they were familiar from my knowledge of *S&H*: image, likeness, Saviour, Father-Mother, Spirit, perfect Mind, perfect man, heal, counterfeit, matter, mortal man, Moses, and Noah. But upon closer observation, I realised some words conveyed different meaning to the second-century writer. Furthermore, other frequently used words were foreign to me, such as Yaldabaoth, aeon, archon, immovable race, pleroma, Pronoia, and numerous demon names. Learning the second-century terminology and the fourth-century Coptic in which the text is translated, I discovered both similar meanings in dissimilar words and dissimilar

meaning in similar words. Enduring ideas surfaced despite language differences and confusing similarities.

‘Healing’ is an unstable word. Traditional meanings are no longer adequate, because its meaning fluctuates.<sup>566</sup> So to discern what these texts tell us about today’s healing theologies and practices, I proceed inductively. But I also note that while inductive reasoning clarifies the meaning of small pieces of evidence for a better understanding of healing, *deductive* reasoning is the *means* for healing in these two historical texts. As theme one of this thesis emphasises, a healer begins with Mind as the cause of all effect, and all real effect must be consistent with the divine Principle. Material senses (the opposite of spiritual sense) never cause God or God’s power.<sup>567</sup>

I am aware that my understanding of God is derived inductively from the conversation with the two texts and their view of God. And my understanding of healing is the result of my deductive reasoning about God’s government of a human situation. It should not be surprising, then, even though most of us would affirm that healing refers to a harmonious adjustment of someone’s difficulty, that the term ‘healing’ would convey a different sense to me than to others who reason differently.

### Relationship between Ancient and Nineteenth-Century Texts

Further research is needed to understand how similar ideas could emerge as revelation to the authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H*, since they had no knowledge of each other. The answer to the question impacts my confidence and practice of

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<sup>566</sup> Stephen Pattison, “Healing: A Flight from Definition,” in *The Challenge of Practical Theology* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers), 2007, 125-31.

<sup>567</sup> Deductive reasoning that produces divine healing is more fully explained in this CS-inspired article: Benjamin Wells Selby, “A Priori Reasoning, A Scientific Necessity,” *Christian Science Sentinel* 51, no. 44 (1949): 1913-15.

healing, because it either strengthens or weakens my faith in the authority of their theological claims. Although the cultural context of their ideas renders them nearly incomprehensible to each other, the ideas are surprisingly similar as are some of their words and language. It could be argued that each had a unique revelation of similar ideas at different times and in different contexts, but other thinkers have posited related ideas throughout the history of religious thought.

Eddy saw a sharp distinction between her understanding of Christian Science and other metaphysical healing communities and insisted on the distinctively Christian character of Christian Science. Emma Curtis Hopkins, one of Eddy's most devoted students, failed to acknowledge this position and made the mistake of claiming to identify some major themes in Eddy's writings similar to those found in nearly all religions, from Emerson to Vedanta philosophy, and the Kabbalah. Hopkins's claims were enough to prompt Eddy to abruptly sever their working relationship.<sup>568</sup> In the years that followed, Eddy's battles over any association with esoteric theosophy or spiritualism remained severe.<sup>569</sup>

It could be argued that some similarity of ideas emerged in different places and in different eras throughout world history between the writing of *SRJ* and *S&H*. However, from Eddy's point of view, her discovery stood apart from all other metaphysical religious healing systems because of her radical stand that the allness of God precluded the possibility of evil's power and of the creation of matter-based substance.

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<sup>568</sup> J. Gordon Melton, "New Thought's Hidden History: Emma Curtis Hopkins, Forgotten Founder," *The Journal of the Society for the Study of Metaphysical Religion* 1, no. 1 (1995): 11,15.

<sup>569</sup> See the discussion of Eddy's battle over free-love and animal magnetism in Chapter Five, "Nineteenth Century: Demons and Animal Magnetism." Gottschalk emphasises this point: "...the deeper reason for her [Eddy's] strong feelings on the subject [comparing Christian Science to Theosophy] is found in the fact that she saw it [Theosophy] as a particularly aggressive form of animal magnetism.... From her perspective, the rise of Theosophy at about the same time as Christian Science represented the growth of the tares among the wheat..." Stephen Gottschalk, *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 157.

From their individual epistemological viewpoints, the authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* might argue that the phenomenon of similar or related ideas would be expected because the same Mind reveals Mindself through all generations and all locations. The title of the ancient text [*The Secret Revelation of John*] informs us that the text is expected to be a *revelation*. Eddy describes her work as a coincidence of revelation and reason, and she considers the evidence she discovered in *Sayings of Jesus*, an ancient manuscript, a ‘significant corroboration.’

The perpetuation of ideas, their authenticity and their authority are all crucial to me as a healer, because I rely directly on ideas rather than bio-physics for the corrective power. For example, the healing of blood infection (referred to in Chapter One) was based on a conviction in the authority and purity of God’s ideas made known to humanity. While Eddy may have been jealously guarding the integrity of her own revelation in comparison with similar ideas of Eastern origin, her defence of it was based her claim to follow Jesus alone. Her specific Christian understanding of God and Christ’s healing power is critical to my own capacity to heal.

DeConick offers another explanation for the perpetuation of ideas that can occur without having to rely on an individual’s affirmation of his or her own revelation *or* without human intention. Her theory, based on an idealised cognitive model, is that the theological or epistemological model present in texts such as *SRJ* refers to a type of spirituality rather than a particular doctrinal system, and that reconceiving these models frees us from the “confinement of typological and systematic definitions.” She concludes that the perpetuating of ideas without human intention

could have been the result of independent developments within human minds. The human mind can only construct so many answers to any given historical moment. .... If these people [those with the same scriptures, myths, philosophies for their metaphysical discussions] also have seeker mentalities and believe themselves to have an innate spiritualness that

demands a transgressive interpretation of scripture and theology, there are only a limited number of metaphysical systems that are likely to emerge from their conversations.<sup>570</sup>

Eddy's own views on the question unintentionally support her claim that her work was both revelation and discovery, and this insight is useful for guiding my own relationship with the ancient text. She derived her only knowledge of 'Gnostics' from nineteenth-century scholarship and general knowledge of the early Christian heresiologists. Based on these sources Eddy considered Gnostic philosophy to be evil.<sup>571</sup> Two years after delivering a sermon that included condemnation against Gnostics, she greeted the discovery of *New Sayings of Jesus* and *The Unwritten Sayings of Christ*,<sup>572</sup> which included portions of the *Gospel of Thomas* and other extracanonical writings, with great enthusiasm and never associated them with the 'Gnostics.' Dictating a letter to Hanna in 1990, she exclaimed that what she had already written was corroborated in her newly acquired texts:

Let me repeat and emphasize that you are to make note of the fact and mention it in this Biography of our Leader that she wrote in S&H long ago what is found in the chapter on the Apocalypse relating to the male and female and that she now has found this significant corroboration thereof, but which she never saw until now, because it was never published before. See S&H 577:4-11 and "New Sayings", Pp. 43 and 44.<sup>573</sup>

The passage Eddy refers to is her own teaching:

The Lamb's wife presents the unity of male and female as no longer two wedded individuals, but two individual natures in one; and this

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<sup>570</sup> DeConick, "Crafting Gnosis," 302.

<sup>571</sup> In an 1888 sermon, she proclaimed Jesus's rebuke to the Gnostic: "From this dazzling, God-crowned summit, the Nazarene stepped suddenly before the people and their schools of philosophy; Gnostic, Epicurean, and Stoic. He must stem these rising angry elements, and walk serenely over their fretted, foaming billows." Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 162.

<sup>572</sup> Copies of the *New Sayings of Jesus* and *The Unwritten Sayings of Christ; Words of Our Lord not Recorded in the Four Gospels, Including Those Recently Discovered*, by Charles G. Griffinhoofe, 1903, used by Eddy and her correspondence related to them are available in the Mary Baker Eddy Library. Her copy of *The Unwritten Sayings of Christ* includes handwritten notes, including her receipt of the book in July 1903.

<sup>573</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, George Kinter to Septimus Hanna for Mary Baker Eddy, 21 August 1900, Mary Baker Eddy Papers, VO3867, Mary Baker Eddy Library.

*compounded spiritual individuality reflects God as Father-Mother, not as a corporeal being.* In this divinely united spiritual consciousness there is no impediment to the perfectibility of God's creation and eternal bliss (emphasis added to indicate Eddy's specific reference).<sup>574</sup>

This "spiritual individuality" resonates with *SRJ*'s teaching that Adam 'recognised' his likeness, or 'essence,' when the woman, his wife, appeared beside him. At this time, Adam announced that he will cling to his wife and his partner...and he will leave his father and mother (21:12-21). Eddy would not have known *SRJ*, since it was discovered in Nag Hammadi thirty-five years after her death, but what she considers a "marvelous coincident," is that the discovery of the *The Unwritten Sayings of Christ* would contain ideas that correspond with her writing in *S&H*. For example, in a letter to Alfred Baker, she wrote,

O I wish you could see a book just sent to me from a Prof. in Great Britain giving the words of Christ that have been found in a recently discovered Logia, recent excavation, and words not in the Canonical Gospels and 200 [300?] years before the Christian era! These words correspond precisely with some of my writings in Science and Health. I only wish the students all would awaken to see the wisdom of what God says through His window.<sup>575</sup>

Whether or not Eddy's claim of revelation or DeConick's cognitive model adequately justifies similarities between the texts, the fact that Eddy intuitively gravitated toward the ideas in the early Christian text, reinforces my confidence in those enduring healing ideas. However, I also acknowledge the scholarly dangers in my own relationship with these texts. Theosophists of the nineteenth century, eager to claim themselves as heir to what they knew of 'Gnostic'<sup>576</sup> texts, saw in them a release from the orthodox hold on interpretation and recognised a

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<sup>574</sup> For the sake of accurate research, I do not have access to her 1890 edition of *S&H*, but this quote is from her 1904 (300<sup>th</sup>) edition, which differs slightly from the current edition. The difference between this and the current edition is the rearrangement of the last phrase, and the addition of the word 'as' between 'but' and 'two individual', and a comma.

<sup>575</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, letter to Alfred Baker, 20 July 1903.

<sup>576</sup> Even though *SRJ* was unknown to nineteenth-century Spiritualists, some of the so-called 'Gnostic' clichés were later applied to any text associated with the Nag Hammadi Library. This is a further reason to honour the text, *SRJ*, for its own sake.



common mental horizon. The influence of this theosophical persuasion on scholarly thought resulted in yet another distorted view of the same texts for the following generation of scholars.

Further research will illuminate this phenomenon, but Eddy was stunned to discover the precision of the ancient ideas that corresponded with her revelation. Critiquing my own position on this question, I find myself in an ambiguous situation. As a healer, I rely on the authority and consistency of the God who reveals spiritual truth. To me, it should be more of a surprise if I could *not* find in antiquity (or any other era) the same God who reveals healing truth. However, the desire to find this God engenders a strong motivation to *seek* the same revelation in ancient texts, or to permit an eisegetical approach to the texts. On that basis, I could easily fall into the same trap that seduced the nineteenth-century Theosophists, and I acknowledge that the ideas in these texts are to be honoured for their own contributions.

### My Twenty-First-Century Response to the Three Themes

In conversation with the texts of the second and nineteenth centuries, I find strength and encouragement from their ideas and traditions, and yet my experiences of being healed and of healing others in the twenty-first century is different from those of the earlier centuries. My study of *S&H* and its explication of the Bible has formed my faith and understanding of healing, and the second-century text presents similar ideas from a radically different culture. So, together they help me navigate my own understanding of healing in a culture different from the nineteenth century, while still relying on similar ideas. My prayers – whether they concern a broken blister, a too-small pelvis, arthritis, or painful lungs (as illustrated in Chapter One) – brought me directly to the God who is both

omnipotent and loving, and who has the authority to dissolve the forms of evil I confronted. Each healing prayer resulted in a transforming aspect related to my salvation.

The greatest cultural difference between the nineteenth century and twenty-first century that emerges from this conversation is the contrast between Puritan and postmodern thought. Pursuing a search for God every hour and overcoming sin as the enemy of life is a worldview that has largely given way to contemporary discovery, valuing differences and thinking independently. Quantum physics challenges twenty-first century thinkers to live with unanswered questions and to release the anchor to empirical knowledge. Just as the ocean of time and space separated second-century Mediterranean culture from nineteenth-century American culture, quantum physics separates me from the nineteenth-century emphasis on rational, empirical knowledge. In the twenty-first century I lean on the same characteristics of God I found in both antiquity and the nineteenth century, but they fit more naturally for me within the framework of quantum physics. Each generation banishes the last generation's fears but faces new ones; and ideas of dominion over demons and animal magnetism still apply to the forms of terrorism that hide throughout the world today.

One of the valuable lessons I learn from studying *SRJ* is that this is a text speaking to the second generation of Christ-followers. Their world had also been transformed from one in which Jesus presented his ideas, and the author shows an example of adapting to a new relationship with Greek philosophers and Roman intolerance. [add footnote: Such as addressing the more sophisticated Greek ideas about creation or incorporating second-century Stoic views of the body.] As a Christian Scientist living in the second century of Christian Science, my greatest personal struggle is dealing with the ambiguity of whether to follow the exact letter of Eddy's teachings or to make a further distinction between the original and relevant teachings and my contemporary culture. Some examples of cultural mismatches include what I

identify as uncaring patriarchy and styles of worship that seem too stiff for this age. On the other hand, I also find myself guilty of pushing for change when tradition should be treated more gently and respectfully. I am sometimes charged with being too willing to accommodate outside ideas and practices, but this reaction prevents me from rightly honouring the pure and humble heart that holds the church together.

All these nuances matter in the context of healing, because humility and selflessness are just as important as wisdom and vision in order to hear the appropriate healing ideas from Christ. Willfulness is dangerous when mixed with mental healing powers, but unselfish love acts as a clear transparency for divine Love's transforming nature.

Two examples of how contemporary and nineteenth-century life differ are the influence of quantum mechanics and the world reaction to terrorism. I will discuss both of them in the context of the first and second themes. They both require adjustments in my thought, and therefore they pull me from the traditions and cultural grounding of the nineteenth-century birth of *S&H*. As such, they both comfort and challenge me, but I must acknowledge their influence in order to fully understand myself as a text in this conversation.

### Theme One – Twenty-First-Century Quantum Physics

Quantum physics poses challenges for everyone. My question is how these scientific discoveries might someday explain the possibility that God (Mind) is the sole source of (true) consciousness. This is the basis of theme one, the primary healing characteristic of God. Experienced quantum physicists repeatedly warn that the link between physics and consciousness is still mysterious and is consequently susceptible to pseudo-scientific nonsense. In fact, Rosenblum and Kuttner claim that “understanding the real *mystery* requires a bit more mental

effort, but it's worth it (emphasis added)."<sup>577</sup> Quantum mechanics may be an enigma, but it is a science that cannot be ignored. It can motivate outrageous speculation, but it cannot be dismissed, because "quantum theory works perfectly; no prediction of the theory has ever been shown in error. It is the theory basic to all physics, and thus to all science."<sup>578</sup>

The fact that it tells us *something* about consciousness and interacts with the physical universe means that its implications are extremely relevant to the scientific claims of Eddy's healing theology and my practice of it. Since the fundamental premise of the healing theology in the two historical texts rests on the power of consciousness to govern the human body, the subject is crucial to a twenty-first-century understanding of healing. In *SRJ*, the pleroma (or heavenly realm) embraces all time, all space, and all being. And it is the place or means by which ideas and/or creation come into being. "The whole of the realm of Providence, which is the pleroma, is defined as the First Man."<sup>579</sup> Eddy also envisions the realm of Mind as the source of all being: "All things beautiful and harmless are ideas of Mind. Mind creates and multiplies them, and the product must be mental."<sup>580</sup>

Bohr (1885-1962) first articulated the mainstream 'Copenhagen Interpretation' – that elementary particles do not exist until they are observed. Thus he and his colleagues (such as Planck, 1858-1947 and Heisenberg, 1933-1976) would argue that observation and matter are one, without definitively identifying the location of the observing consciousness.<sup>581</sup> In their famous 'EPR'

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<sup>577</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 9.

<sup>578</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 269.

<sup>579</sup> Davies, *Secret Book of John*, 30.

<sup>580</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 280.

<sup>581</sup> Planck said, "I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as a derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything we talk about, everything we regard as existing, postulates consciousness." J.W.N. Sullivan, "Interviews with the Great Scientists VI: Max Planck," *The Observer*, 25 Jan 1931, 17.

(Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen) paper of 1935 Einstein and his colleagues questioned Bohr's assertions that quantum theory was consistent and its predictions would always be correct.<sup>582</sup> Einstein was troubled, though: "I like to think the moon is there," he quipped, "even if I am not looking at it." Yet he conceded, "It is basic for physics that one assumes a real world existing independently from any act of perception – but this we do not *know*. (Italics in original.)"<sup>583</sup> Quantum theory contains *no* physical properties that can be considered 'real' in the sense that they could exist without being observed, so Einstein sought to prove the existence of a world existing independently of its observation. He wanted to prove the incompleteness of quantum theory.<sup>584</sup> But it worked too well. His own discovery of the 'spooky action at a distance' theory appeared to prove the immediate connectedness of everything.

He showed how two elementary particles, though separated at a great distance, really have to be one, because the *viewing* of one causes the same thing to happen to the other. John Bell later constructed an experiment to measure this 'spooky' phenomenon<sup>585</sup> (later known as 'entanglement') which led to two strange conclusions: (1) nothing is real at all, but exists merely as a result of our perception, *or* (2) there is some influence that travels faster than light.<sup>586</sup> That is, the objects of our so-called physical world do *not* have their own independent existence, because particles depend upon *observation* or measurement for their

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<sup>582</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 159.

<sup>583</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 166.

<sup>584</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 167-9.

<sup>585</sup> In the 1970s, experiments were finally designed to test the mathematical theories, and in the 1980s Alain Aspect of Paris was actually able to perform the experiment, successfully verifying Einstein's original entanglement (or 'instantaneousness') hypothesis.

<sup>586</sup> Michael Brooks, "Spooky action at a distance: Entanglement," *The Quantum World* 3, New Scientist: The Collection, no. 3 (2016), 11.

being. Or else some influence operating faster than physical possibility accounts for the actions of things.

The implications of causative power outside the realm of material substance strengthen the possibility of Mind as the cause. At least it gives some plausible explanation for such phenomena as Jesus healing at a distance. A man had approached Jesus, begging him to come to heal his son who was at the point of death, but Jesus told him to return home, because his son would live without Jesus needing to be there. On his way, the father met with his servants who informed him of his son's healing which occurred at the same time Jesus promised it (*John 4:46-54*).

Heisenberg, a theoretical physicist and pioneer in quantum mechanics recognised that:

Some physicists would prefer to come back to the idea of an objective real world whose smallest parts exist objectively in the same sense as stones or trees exist independently of whether we observe them. This however is impossible.<sup>587</sup>

When we let go of our expectancy of time, space, and the substance of *things*, we will inevitably discover something more than “the same sense of stones or tree,” because *things* behave in some kind of relationship to consciousness.

The consistent *unpredictability* of quantum mechanics parallels the web relationships discussed in this thesis<sup>588</sup>, which require *abductive* reasoning. Like inductive reasoning, it is a form of logical inference which goes from an observation to a theory which accounts for the observation. But unlike inductive reasoning, abductive reasoning seeks the simplest and most likely explanation,

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<sup>587</sup> Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*, Gifford Lectures, 1955/56, World Perspectives. (New York: Harper & Row, 1992), as quoted in Carl C. Gaither and Alma E. Cavazos-Gaither, eds., *Gaither's Dictionary of Scientific Quotations: A Collection of Approximately 27,000 Quotations Pertaining to Archaeology, Architecture, Astronomy, Technology, Theory, Universe, and Zoology* (London: Springer, 2012), 1738.

<sup>588</sup> See Chapter Two, “The Meaning of the ‘Web’ in Current PT Theology.”

despite human discomfort with its conclusions.<sup>589</sup> The discomfort in quantum physics is understandable, as even Einstein resisted the implications of his own discoveries.<sup>590</sup>

Our conventional wisdom, our worldview shaped by classical physics, is challenged by quantum physics, because it is fundamentally flawed. Instantaneous connectedness underlies the universe at its most basic level. However, Rosenblum and Kuttner argue that modern physics does not replace classical physics in the same way that the heliocentric solar system replaced a geocentric concept of it. They do affirm, though, that if you dig deep enough you have either empirical facts (which are challenged by quantum mechanics) or consciousness to support the foundation of reality.<sup>591</sup> Astrophysicist Doyle offers a degree of comfort explaining that in fact, the scientific revolution has already determined it is *not* the evidence of matter, but the evidence of *intelligence*, which we generally agree is found to be superior and more reliable. For example, Copernicus used mathematics to re-envision the revolution of the ‘heavenly spheres’ and persuaded others to change their *beliefs* based on these mathematical proofs, which contradicted the findings of the physical senses.<sup>592</sup>

Sir James Jeans, a pioneering physicist of the early twentieth century suggested implications of these quantum discoveries many decades ago:

The stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.

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<sup>589</sup> An example of inductive reasoning was Copernicus’s choice between two theories that fit his data: either a design with complex orbits of planets that kept the sun at the centre of the solar system, or the counterintuitive but simpler design of the sun at the centre with simple orbits. Abductively, he chose the far simpler design, even though the conclusion was far more difficult for human thought to acknowledge.

<sup>590</sup> Michael Brooks, "Matter of interpretation," *The Quantum World* 3, New Scientist: The Collection, no. 3 (2016), 16. Another way to describe this alternative is that “according to quantum theory, entanglement travels infinitely fast. But for a remote person to become *aware* of the condition of the counter, he or she would have to communicate by some *physical* means, which could not exceed the speed of light.” Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 240.

<sup>591</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 242.

<sup>592</sup> I am grateful to astrophysicist Dr. Laurance Doyle for granting me an interview in which he shared these ideas. 5 January 2016.

Mind no longer appears to be an accidental intruder into the realm of matter... we ought rather hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter.<sup>593</sup>

The implications of quantum mechanics are as uncertain in theology as in the fields of philosophy, psychology, and biology, but certain things *can* be said that contribute to our understanding of healing in the twenty-first century. The basic idea of quantum physics – that at least *some* things depend on observation for their existence – is irrefutable, and that phenomenon is consistent with, not in tension with, the basic premise of the healing principles in *SRJ* and *S&H*. Roughly fifty years before Einstein presented the EPR paper, Eddy wrote, “The physical universe expresses the conscious and unconscious thoughts of mortals.”<sup>594</sup> All three ‘texts’ in this thesis conversation draw from radically different cultural sources of scientific knowledge, where cause is in consciousness, not in inanimate matter. Quantum physics appears to agree with its possibility. And it is “stunningly successful. Not a single one of the theory’s predictions has ever been shown wrong.”<sup>595</sup> Eddy argues equally vigorously for the unbreakable science of her theology: “You can prove for yourself, dear reader, the Science of healing, and so ascertain if the author has given you the correct interpretation of Scripture.”<sup>596</sup> The voice of contemporary science and my own healing experiences confirm Eddy’s defence of her interpretation of Scripture. If the father’s son was healed, as recounted in the *Gospel of John*, due to the same law that governs the ‘spooky action’ Einstein discovered, then it could also be possible that *SRJ* was a textbook on healing ‘with words’ – or thoughts - as Plotinus complained.<sup>597</sup> I want to emphasise that the current interpretations of quantum mechanics do not *prove*

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<sup>593</sup> Richard C. Henry, "The Mental Universe," *Nature* 436, no. 7 July 2005, 29.

<sup>594</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 484.

<sup>595</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 5.

<sup>596</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 547.

<sup>597</sup> Plotinus’s complaint that his opponents claimed to cleanse themselves of diseases by driving them out with words was discussed in Chapter Five, “Demon Tactics and Counter Tactics.”



that this data is all explained by quantum theory, but the fact that all three texts are consistent with quantum theory triangulates the fuller understanding of healing.

## Theme Two – Twenty-First-Century Fear

One of the greatest evils I encounter in my twenty-first-century life experience is unchecked fear. Terrorism will have won its war with the world unless society learns to deal with fear ('overcome it,' 'heal it'). The supposed power of terrorism is its ability to terrorise, and the resulting fear manifests itself in a polarisation of power, rendering us victims of everything from climate change to oppression, killers, medical expenses, and even microaggressions. Speaking from earlier centuries, *SRJ* and *S&H* provide a relevant response to the contemporary threat of terrorism by teaching the fraudulent nature of all evil. Such realisation frees us from its power to control us.

From this perspective, I look to these texts to support my ability to discern the fraudulence of evil in this situation. *SRJ* exposed its impotence and fraudulence through its handling of passions. Specifically, it claims that fear was caused by demons (17:51,57), and the rulers (demons) "made the whole creation blind so that they might not know the God who is above them all" through imposing ignorance, 'severe sins,' and 'great fears' (24:13,14). The *SRJ* Saviour awakens them from these false impositions on their thought. Eddy argues that fear is a 'self-constituted falsity' and that God, Love destroys its claims: "Science saith to fear, "You are the cause of all sickness; but you are a self-constituted falsity, — you are darkness, nothingness. You are without 'hope, and without God in the

world.’ You do not exist, and have no right to exist, for ‘perfect Love casteth out fear.’”<sup>598</sup>

Others, who have courageously denounced its fraudulence too, encourage me to look for its evidence in my own experience. American President F. D. Roosevelt, for example, famously proclaimed that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”<sup>599</sup> But *SRJ* and *S&H* explain *why* fear is falsity and how to overcome the manipulative powers of fear. Confronting microaggressions, a contemporary symptom of systemic fear, is one particular way for me to participate in the healing impact of the message in theme two.

Social psychologist Haidt explains the relatively new phenomenon of microaggressions as “a form of social control in which the aggrieved collect and publicize accounts of intercollective offenses making the case that relatively minor slights are part of a larger pattern of injustice and that those who suffer them are socially marginalized and deserving of sympathy.”<sup>600</sup> It means that America (and possibly most of the Western world) has embraced a cultural attitude known as ‘victimhood.’ It shows up in society’s tolerance of microaggressions and has led to a climate of fear, where every slight is taken as an offence, as an opportunity to emphasise oppression and social marginalisation.<sup>601</sup> The only possible outcome of victimhood is mounting fear. This intensifying fear draws me into a response, where my worldview, healing experience, and study of *SRJ* and *S&H* move me from an observing analyst to a healing participant. I rebel against the complacent

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<sup>598</sup> Eddy, *Retrospection*, 61.

<sup>599</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, first inaugural address, <http://www.history.com/speeches/franklin-d-roosevelts-first-inaugural-address?m=55cce9921285b&ts=undefined&f=undefined&free=false>, 1933.

<sup>600</sup> Jonathan Haidt, “Where microaggressions really come from: A sociological account,” topic #5, “The Social Structure of Microaggression.” <http://righteousmind.com/where-microaggressions-really-come-from/>, a blog related to his book *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012).

<sup>601</sup> Conor Friedersdorf, “Microaggressions and the Rise of Victimhood Culture,” *The Atlantic* (11 September 2015), 7, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-rise-of-victimhood-culture/404794/>.

agreement with 'victimhood attitude' and seek evidence of the 'self-constituted falsity' causing the collective agreement with microaggressions.

While great strides have been taken to recognise the evil of racism and the patriarchal oppression of marginalised communities, society has not yet correctly identified the underlying fear or cause of the problem. 'Political correctness' may identify the evil of racism, but it does not adequately address racial insensitivity. It provides no guidelines for distinguishing between a true crime and a minor social slip, nor the means for resisting victimhood. According to *SRJ* and *S&H*, though, fear at any level causes us to judge incorrectly, not seeing the true goodness of God's entire creation. In the eyes of God, good, who creates all Humans\* in the image and likeness of God, racism is an evil mockery of creation. Taking offence is a form of victimisation, a fear that blames other people (God's creation) for obstructing our own will. Both those who are seriously injured in crime as well as those who react to microaggressions suffer from these fears.

In conversation with these texts, I understand I have plenty of opportunity to break the cycle of fear and victimisation, first in my own thought about it, and then in my own cultural context. I have seen acts of microaggressions in the press, in my business encounters,<sup>602</sup> and in personal relations. Dealing with my own thought first requires earnest prayer, because giving lip-service to the falsity of fear fails to change my own reaction. Theologically grounded prayer, logic, experience, and insight strengthen my faith in opposing the pictures of fear and reaction within me, which I must confront as directly as anyone else in this age. Prayer exposes whatever self-righteousness, fear, or ignorance I need to repent from in order to witness God's presence and goodness. Then, from whatever healing I have experienced within myself, I am in a better position to participate in

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<sup>602</sup> I refer specifically to my own experiences in formal ecumenical dialogues, dialogues of racial reconciliation, and informal political discussions.

society's need for healing. I view this second theme – dealing with evil – as a personal call for me to oppose a serious form of evil in this age.

### Theme Three – Twenty-First-Century Healing

There are few human professions that relate so directly to one's own salvation as the practice of CS healing – *because* it is based on the inseparability of healing and salvation. Every treatment I give for another comes from the depth of my prayers for myself, my own salvation. Eddy counsels boldly: "If you fail to succeed in any case, it is because you have not demonstrated the life of Christ, Truth, more in your own life, — because you have not obeyed the rule and proved the Principle of divine Science."<sup>603</sup> She means this not as an indictment, but as guidance for the healer to seek the full life of Christ in his or her own life now, not later. Finding the "full life of Christ in my own life" defines 'salvation' for me; it reaches all corners of my soul now and forever. So every correction of my heart and mind impacts my salvation and my capacity to heal others. In light of such demands, I also lean heavily on Eddy's counsel for healers to be patient with themselves: "Wait patiently for divine Love to move upon the waters of mortal mind, and form the perfect concept. Patience must 'have her perfect work.'"<sup>604</sup>

In this chapter, I remain within the epistemological framework of the historical texts, while I engage in conversation with them from a critical perspective. That is, I practise healing and prayerfully commit to the responsibility of working out my salvation, because I agree with the inseparability of healing and salvation. Therefore, the second-century narrative and nineteenth-century textbook strengthen, encourage, and direct my faith and study. But my

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<sup>603</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 149.

<sup>604</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 454. Her biblical reference is "But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (*James* 1:4 KJV).

daily healing work – for myself and for others – must be honestly evaluated within the context of my own salvation. From insignificant issues to life-changing ones, resulted in a degree of spiritual transformation, so now my commitment to healing is an irresistible desire to help others as I have been helped. My patients usually ask for physical relief, but I know that the difficulty underlying the problem relates to something that needs adjusting in their relationship with God and humanity. I expect their healings to result in transformation of soul and body as well. Therefore my twenty-first-century engagement with the third theme within these texts is inspiring, challenging, and practical.

Since I rely on theological precision and the consciousness of love for my work, I look to sources that teach and affirm both. I had known *S&H* all my life, but my discovery of *SRJ* has deepened and strengthened my faith and understanding. Although most of my prayer and preparation continues with biblical study and is supplemented with Eddy's writings,<sup>605</sup> I live with a constant self-critique. What else should I be learning? Where are my personal weaknesses? What will most help my patients? What happened when a patient is not healed?

Hagerty grew up with similar Christian Science training and healing experiences in CS to mine. But despite her dramatic healing of scarlet fever through CS treatment when she was fourteen years old, she left CS claiming the healing practice was too difficult. Her experience is instructive to me, because in her book she asks many of the questions I wrestle with. The question lingered in her mind: how *does* one explain cures such as her own experience without medical explanations? Among many near-death experiences (NDE) she investigated, one triggered new insights which coincided with the teaching she had learned from

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<sup>605</sup> The CS Church also provides numerous avenues for education and inspiration, such as bi-weekly services, a Bible Lesson intended for daily study, and helpful weekly and monthly religious literature written by contemporary writers. I also attend an annual association meeting of fellow healers for a refresher course presented by Church-authorised teachers. Public lectures, Reading Rooms (study resource areas open to the public during non-service hours), Sunday School for children and teens are other resources for prayer, education, and inspiration. Testimonials, as mentioned in Chapter One, "Self as Conversation Partner," are also intended to educate and inspire.

Eddy. A sixty-year old hospitalised patient who had suffered from cerebral palsy since birth, with a hand curled inward and useless, became unresponsive when his heart stopped beating and vital signs suddenly flattened. Like others who have reported feeling unrestricted body movements from their out-of-body states, this patient discovered he could open and use his hand despite the life-long shortened tendons. But shockingly, he continued to be able to move his hand freely even after his consciousness and life returned to his body.

Hagerty wondered if his contact with death broke the physical laws that had formerly kept him disabled. Furthermore, “what if no laws of nature were in fact broken?” she asks. “What if he came in line with spiritual laws that we do not yet understand?”<sup>606</sup> From her extensive research, she concludes, “We have all about us the fingerprints of God.”<sup>607</sup> Einstein’s interpretation of his investigation is similar to Hagerty’s interpretation of her own. Neither can confirm, but neither can deny the existence of a divine consciousness that governs the body.

Many NDE stories demonstrate a connection between consciousness and body, and this phenomenon is inexplicable in neuroscience. Each of the many accounts of NDE I am familiar with has made a strong assertion that consciousness continued after death. Dr. Alexander, a neurosurgeon who experienced the shutting down of the part of the brain that controls thought and emotion, remained in a coma for seven days. His vivid account of his thoughts and experience countered his own medical education, and he came to three startling conclusions: First, “that the universe is much larger than it appears to be if we only look at its immediately visible parts;” second, “we – each of us – are

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<sup>606</sup> Barbara Bradley Hagerty, *Fingerprints of God: The Search for the Science of Spirituality* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009), 279.

<sup>607</sup> Hagerty, *Fingerprints of God*, 285.

intricately, irremovably connected to the larger universe;” and third, we can acknowledge “the crucial power of *belief* in facilitating ‘mind-over-matter.’”<sup>608</sup>

My conversation with the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* is an extension of Hagerty’s questioning and Alexander’s discovery. Hagerty’s struggle with faith, logic, and the hard work of self-discipline and growth in spiritual grace coincides with my own battle with doubt and fear. Do the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* tell me something about the laws of God that explains these experiences? Both perceive the illusory nature of the body under the control of evil spirits (demons/gods/beliefs); and both envision the role of the Saviour in awakening individuals from such delusion to freedom of life experience, where bodies are cared for and controlled (healed) by the conscious government of Spirit/God/Mind. Bringing them into conversation with the twenty-first-century advances in quantum physics and research such as Hagerty’s encourages me to keep learning and working.

Conversing with these historical texts in the twenty-first century presents benefits and new difficulties. Quantum physics provides explanations for the *possibility* of the government of consciousness over bodies, but leaves even more questions unanswered. Evil is just as cruel in its torture of humanity as it ever has been, but the theological explanations and experiences of the past provide insights for the threats of terrorism and victimised attitudes of today. And finally, the promises of healing based on the salvific work of Christ are as relevant today as they were in centuries past, but the corresponding demands on the healer to confront the issues of his or her own salvation persist and probe the depths of faith.

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<sup>608</sup> Eben Alexander, *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2012), 152-154.

## Chapter Eight: Contradictory Epistemological Views in Conversation

The goal of this chapter is to refute Davies's claim that the two epistemological perspectives represented by a 'social-model religion' and what I term as a 'Mind-model religion' are incompatible.<sup>609</sup> I agree that their contradictory epistemological differences cause conversation difficulties, but I claim an overriding view is that *understanding* such differences allows for the "mutually enriching, intellectually critical, and practically transforming"<sup>610</sup> conversation we anticipate in PT methodology. The selected conversation partners are committed to important commonalities such as a mutual interest in caring for others and a solid theological foundation for such care, but bring rich contrast in their experience with the three themes. In this chapter, I leave my epistemological worldview to reposition myself as facilitator of the critical conversation. Adopting a perspectival view, I expect to facilitate the social construction of the conversation, which should dissolve the walls of the bubble I described in the introduction.

The topics I have selected are questions I hear most frequently from traditional 'social model of religion'<sup>611</sup> Christians who approach all three texts from the basis of their contrasting action-guiding worldview. Topics are organised by the main issues within the three themes. In topic one – the healing characteristics of God – the deepest question most often heard is whether revelation, metaphysics, and/or radical faith are necessary to perceive God's

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<sup>609</sup> The terms 'social-model religion' and 'mind-model religion' were defined by Davies and discussed in Chapter Two, "Methodological Problems and Solutions."

<sup>610</sup> This phrase – quoting Pattison – was used in the thesis Introduction to describe the PT expectations of the critical conversation for this thesis. Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology*, 12.

<sup>611</sup> This terminology was used in contrast with 'mind-models of religion' by Davies, explained in Chapter Two, "Methodological Problems and Solutions."



healing powers, and if so, do these mental methods cause fundamentalism? The second topic – dealing with evil – evokes discussion on the origin of sin and how it manifests itself in humanity. And for the third topic, the most commonly heard question concerns the meaning of healing in the context of modern medicine.

## Theme One – Mental Methods for Discerning God’s Healing Powers

Christian theologians representing many traditions hold that God is able to heal. But they differ on how humans experience that spiritual reality. In the conversation among the three texts, the idea that God reveals spiritual knowledge to bring about healing is a point of agreement. An important and probing question from other Christians is whether revelation, metaphysics, and/or radical faith are necessary to perceive God’s healing powers. If so, how far do these mental methods extend in contradistinction to empirical knowledge? Do they generate fundamentalism, or are they relevant to the rest of society?

### Agnostics and Revelation

According to its title, *SRJ* is a revelation; Eddy claims that her healing system is a coinciding of reason and revelation.<sup>612</sup> Yet the philosophical position of Mind revealing Mindself can be challenged as a self-authenticating theory. Who is able to defend or deny someone else’s claim to revelation? Some theologians, such as Plantinga, defend revelation as an understandable phenomenon, and oppose a kind of natural theology in which theists’ beliefs are based on reason and experience. Revelation is logically acceptable even though our sense of divinity does not always work properly, he claims, because humans have a disposition to

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<sup>612</sup> See Chapter One, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures as Conversation Partner.”

form theistic beliefs.<sup>613</sup> But agnostics counter, arguing that revelation is contingent on faith or belief in God's existence, and they do not have it. Thus, on the basis of faith or belief, Mind/God cannot be proven to exist.<sup>614</sup>

Menssen and Sullivan argue that agnostics call for a better way to conceive the believability of revelation than do theists, because they seek a *probable* case that God has revealed something of meaning to their lives. To do so, agnostics need to seek a case *for* the claim that is better than any against it.<sup>615</sup> Therefore, the emphasis returns to the evidence for or against the claim, relying on inductive, rather than deductive reasoning. Eddy agrees that revelation is justified, but *only* when revelation coincides with reason and can be demonstrated through healing works.

Her argument is slightly different from that of the agnostics, however, because she claims that those who have *really* been saved from sin, sickness and even death, are those who can rightly testify to the evidence *for* the claim:

The true man, really *saved*, is ready to testify of God in the infinite penetration of Truth, and can affirm that the Mind which is good, or God, has no knowledge of sin. In the same manner the sick lose their sense of sickness, and gain that spiritual sense of harmony which contains neither discord nor disease.<sup>616</sup>

Such reasoning could appear circular to agnostics, but those who have *experienced* salvation from sin or sickness find no other logical explanation for it. Eddy's defence is that scientific reasoning begins with Mind, not human belief. Her revelation, coincident with reason – *and* with the physical evidence of cure – can offer the agnostic reasonable evidence in support of the claim of Mind's healing power. This evidence is better than the evidence against it.

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<sup>613</sup> Sandra Menssen and Thomas D. Sullivan, *The Agnostic Inquirer: Revelation from a Philosophical Standpoint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 9.

<sup>614</sup> Menssen, *Agnostic Inquirer*, 9.

<sup>615</sup> Menssen, *Agnostic Inquirer*, 15-16.

<sup>616</sup> Eddy, *Unity of Good*, 2.

Whether or not the agnostic is prepared to agree that the evidence is sufficient, it provides a logical explanation of healing accounts in the New Testament as well as contemporary anecdotal evidence. These stories need not be dismissed as inexplicable miracles, proofs of the right god, or, as Pilch argues, merely the restoration of cultural meaning.<sup>617</sup> They also lend credibility to such modern phenomena as placebos,<sup>618</sup> accounts of near-death experiences,<sup>619</sup> and other accounts of spontaneous healing.<sup>620</sup>

However, even if the evidence of healing coincides with the theological reasoning of Mind's/God's goodness and power, the classic question arises: "How can God be simultaneously transcendent and immanent, as healing implies?" Eddy affirms that God is not self-contradictory and is therefore not both immanent and 'other' simultaneously. According to the Law of Non-Contradiction, "Nothing is both A and not A." God is always immanent, since what seems transcendental only appears so to one who does not fully discern the spiritual substance of being. Barth finds parallels in Eddy's definition of evil as "nothing claiming to be something,"<sup>621</sup> but he does not resist the *somethingness* of something other than God.<sup>622</sup> Eddy maintains that admitting that a Being other than God *coexists with* the effect of God is illogical and destroys the efficacy of the laws of healing.

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<sup>617</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 94-96.

<sup>618</sup> William Kremer, "Why Are Placebos Getting More Effective?" *BBC News* (20 October 2015), <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34572482>.

<sup>619</sup> As Alexander's experience illustrates: Chapter Seven, "Theme Three – Twenty-First-Century Healing."

<sup>620</sup> As Hagerty's examples illustrate: *Fingerprints of God*, esp. 192-242.

<sup>621</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 330.

<sup>622</sup> Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959), 36.

Her own healing record is difficult to dispute as strong evidence of her theories. But questions remain: What, then, is the theological justification for why some who seek CS treatment are healed, and some are not? Why does one individual experience some healings but not others? If death falls into the same category as sin and disease as illusory in nature, what does a perfect demonstration of that truth look like? When does one have sufficient experience with healing to claim the full and final salvation? What is the theological explanation for those who are cured without any knowledge of the 'Mind-model' theology? Will technology supplant the accomplishments of God? Does this healing theology heighten God's power for humanity and diminish God's power in medical models, or does it merely conceive God's power differently?

I agree with Menssen and Sullivan that instead of seeking the proof of God's revealing, the agnostic seeks evidence for the claim he would *like to believe* rather than evidence against it. Agnostics' questions penetrate blind faith, and yet ultimately agnostics require a degree of faith in something bigger than they fully comprehend. The same argument applies to physicists, who have equal difficulty accounting for consciousness itself. "To this writer's knowledge [Stephen Palmer], nobody has ever suggested a theory that the scientific community regards as giving even a remotely plausible causal account of how consciousness arises or why it has the particular qualities it does."<sup>623</sup> To some degree, humans require faith to function and to experience the effects of what they seek to know, and some of the answers to the questions continue to lead to more evidence for everyone.

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<sup>623</sup> Quoting Stephen Palmer in his critically acclaimed *Vision Science: Photons to Phenomenology* (1999), 630. Menssen, *Agnostic Inquirer*, 39.

Arguments in favour of God's allness necessarily confront the appearance of something *unlike* God, and nothing seems to antagonise human thought more than the claim that God's unlikeness, matter, could be insubstantial, or not what it appears to be. But the tension has endured. Paul told the Romans that the 'children of the flesh' are not the 'children of God' (*Rom 9:8*). The author of *SRJ* reports that demons threw the newly created man "down into the lowest part of all matter" (18:18), where the false rulers attempted to subjugate and ultimately destroy all creation. Eddy sharply distinguishes the dream of life in matter from the reality of being: "This state of error [soul dwelling in sense, or mind dwelling in matter] is the mortal dream of life and substance as existent in matter, and is directly opposite to the immortal reality of being."<sup>624</sup> And yet contemporary mainline Christians usually consider that the creation of the material world is God's loving act. The world is our gift to cherish and care for with love. Conversation between these two worldviews can offer new mutually beneficial insights.

Questions about consciousness, matter, and reality may result in a new understanding of the unification of science and some form of higher consciousness, but we still need to identify the small bits of evidence and reason abductively to find such a relationship. Rosenblum's and Kuttner's argument that quantum mechanics challenges the classical view of reality may demonstrate how science can do for consciousness what it has already done for matter. They argue that reality – not a subjective reality, but the kind of objective reality we all agree on – may be perceived differently because classical physics "allows the tacit isolation of consciousness and its associated free will from the domain of the

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<sup>624</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 311.

physicist's concern."<sup>625</sup> Classical physics divides the universe between mind and matter, whereas quantum physics dissolves the distinction. Quantum theory opposes the notion of reality defined as a "physically real property *not* created by observation"<sup>626</sup> and raises serious questions about the identity or substance of tangible things. But it also forces us to consider phenomena once accepted as beyond the realm of physical truths, such as the role of the free will of an 'experimenter.' Free will and metaphysical reasoning cannot be contained within the reality defined by classical physics. Eddy's treatment of 'reality' as a state of consciousness could be considered as a nineteenth-century version of the phenomena we know today as quantum physics.

Quantum physics' instantaneous connectedness and the fact that things do not exist until observed – at least in the realm of science, if not in general human thought – are challenges that shed new light on old questions.<sup>627</sup> Einstein's question, whether the laws of the universe including things greater than the size of particles were independent of the observer, remains unanswered by most modern physicists.<sup>628</sup> But the authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* claim that the universe is created by thinking. For example:

*Secret Revelation of John*: "In every way It [Spirit/Mind] perceived Its own image, seeing It in the pure light-water which surrounds It. And *Its thinking becomes a thing*" (5:11-13).

*Science and Health*: "Infinite Mind is the creator, and creation is the infinite image or idea emanating from this Mind" (256).

Despite the anachronistic relationship of their ideas, these authors might have answered Einstein's question in the affirmative.

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<sup>625</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 33, 34.

<sup>626</sup> Rosenblum and Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma*, 187.

<sup>627</sup> Doyle adds that "About one-third of the world's economy is presently based on quantum physics. Einstein's relativity transformed physics of the twentieth century, but his discovery of entanglement will, I think, lead twenty-first-century physics." Interview with Shirley Paulson, 5 January 2016.

<sup>628</sup> While the predominant Copenhagen Interpretation would answer this question in the negative, there are still some interpretations that do not concur with the Copenhagen Interpretation.

The authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* argue that God is the one and only Observer and that observing His/Her ideas is the act of ongoing creation. A half century before Einstein's paper on entanglement was published,<sup>629</sup> Eddy had written "The material atom is an outlined falsity of consciousness,..."<sup>630</sup> She also foresaw the consequences of such a jarring conclusion. "The crude creations of mortal thought must finally give place to the glorious forms which we sometimes behold in the camera of divine Mind, when the mental picture is spiritual and eternal."<sup>631</sup> While the interpretation of quantum physics introduces a metaphysical approach to contemporary science, mainstream skepticism toward metaphysics provides an important balance in the conversation. Metaphysics without scientific methodology can become merely speculative imagination. However, innovative metaphysical ideas recently justified by interpretations of quantum mechanics also have the potential to contribute valuable insights toward serious theological, medical, or sociological issues. Demonstrable proof of otherwise inexplicable physical experiences in the form of Christian healing can substantiate the need for further conversation among these disciplines.

### The Edges of Fundamentalism

According to all three texts, claiming God's omnipotence and goodness requires radical faith, metaphysical clarity, and spiritual knowledge. In light of their opposition to empirical knowledge, such a radical approach to knowledge might allow for thought patterns beyond standard norms of social value. Are

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<sup>629</sup> 'Entanglement' was discussed more fully in Chapter Seven, "My Twenty-First-Century Engagement with *SRJ* and *S&H*."

<sup>630</sup> Eddy, *Unity of Good*, 35.

<sup>631</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 263.

readers of *S&H* and *SRJ* required to develop a fundamentalist approach to the text in order to heal, or is there space for a range of hermeneutical differences? Does the similarity between *SRJ* and *S&H* mean they could share the same healing authority, or do even minuscule differences cancel the validity of the other's true power to heal?

Leone's article, "The Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality,"<sup>632</sup> provides a useful boundary between what is fundamentalist and what is not, and helps analyse the specific relationship between *S&H* and its readers. A fundamentalist religious culture should be defined as a semiotic style that relies on the centrality of a particular text and produces discourse different from non-fundamentalist religious cultures.<sup>633</sup> Such an analysis of *SRJ* is difficult because we know so little about its contemporary readers, but some comparisons may be useful. I will place *SRJ* in conversation with *S&H* after the following analysis of fundamentalism in *S&H* readership. I argue that Eddy's admonition that readers need strict obedience and spiritual growth in order to achieve success in healing approaches the edges of fundamentalism, but does not cross the boundary.

From my experience as a twenty-first-century reader of *S&H* and healer, I think there is a tendency in the CS movement to cross that boundary, but many do not cross it. The tension lies between the demand for radical faith in a transcendent reality in order to achieve healing and the need to communicate with others who seek to understand. The true fundamentalist has no need for communication with or edification from others with different hermeneutics; on the other hand, according to Leone, a text needs at least two interpretations in

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<sup>632</sup> Massimo Leone, "The Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 26, no. 1 (2013): 227-39.

<sup>633</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 229.



order to communicate anything. Without interpreters, a text “is not a text anymore. It is a machine; a non-semiotic machine.”<sup>634</sup>

Therefore, this boundary is of critical concern, especially if the text becomes meaningless outside the fundamentalist community. Fervent believers, according to Leone’s definition, should not necessarily be accused of mindlessness or even intolerance. Ardent believers of a particular semiotic style who are also able to participate in semiotic analysis can cope with differences and therefore communicate. Eddy provides examples of her high valuation of her own work, while still encouraging ‘fervent believers.’ She claimed divine authority – thus ‘radical faith in a transcendent reality’ – for her book, but she also believed it was accessible to teachers, students, healers, and patients:

A Christian Scientist requires my work *SCIENCE AND HEALTH* for his textbook, and so do all his students and patients. Why? *First:* Because it is the voice of Truth to this age, and contains the full statement of Christian Science, or the Science of healing through Mind. *Second:* Because it was the first book known, containing a thorough statement of Christian Science. Hence it gave the first rules for demonstrating this Science, and registered the revealed Truth *uncontaminated by human hypotheses*. Other works, which have borrowed from this book without giving it credit, have adulterated the Science. *Third:* Because this book has done more for teacher and student, for healer and patient, than has been accomplished by other books.<sup>635</sup>

Even though Eddy positions *S&H* as ‘uncontaminated by human hypotheses,’ she believes that people of different needs would be able to communicate with it and with others. Leone explains that “centrality of a written textual corpus in the semiosphere of a religious culture is not a sufficient feature to define the relation between the corpus and the culture as ‘fundamentalist.’”<sup>636</sup> Nor even is the conviction in the text’s infallibility a proper designation of fundamentalism. Neither literalism, infallibility, nor non-contradiction can qualify for the ‘semiotic style’ of fundamentalism, because all these characteristics define a fervent believer.

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<sup>634</sup> Leone, “Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality,” 237.

<sup>635</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 456.

<sup>636</sup> Leone, “Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality,” 228.

### *Hermeneutic Rigidity*

What ultimately distinguishes a fundamentalist believer from a fervent believer is that “the fundamentalist interpreter rejects the idea itself of interpretation, of mediation between a religious text and a community of believers: it is transcendence itself that, without hindrance, speaks to humanity through the religious text.”<sup>637</sup> The boundary between fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists is drawn, then, between those who strive toward a sort of anti-hermeneutics and those who resist a total hermeneutic rigidity. Leone’s concern is relevant for the community defined by *S&H*, or the CS Church: “The main question therefore is: is the fundamentalist semiotic style suitable to individuate, address, and iron out tensions and conflicts that might arise at the frontiers between different semiospheres?”<sup>638</sup> Eddy respects and encourages original thought from her readers: “Academics of the right sort are requisite,” she explains. “Observation, invention, study, and original thought are expansive and should promote the growth of mortal mind out of itself, out of all that is mortal.”<sup>639</sup> But human thought must yield to the divine in order to truly understand her writing. “Works on science are profitable,” she argues, “for science is not human. It is spiritual, and not material. Literature and languages, to a limited extent, are aids to a student of the Bible and of Christian Science.”<sup>640</sup>

Deeply concerned that her writing be understood by those who wished to learn the power of biblical healing through her works, Eddy wrote extensive instructions intended to safeguard such readers. Contrary to ecclesial tradition, she prohibited personal preaching or any other form of human interpretation of Bible

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<sup>637</sup> Leone, “Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality,” 232.

<sup>638</sup> Leone, “Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality,” 236.

<sup>639</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 195.

<sup>640</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 64.

Lessons designed for church services.<sup>641</sup> Church members are instructed not to buy, sell, or circulate literature that is ‘incorrect’ in spirit or letter.<sup>642</sup>

However, even loyal church members have had difficulty distinguishing the difference between safeguarding the correctness of CS literature and exercising control over readers. Eddy was furious to learn of her students’ plans to promote her works through manipulation. Chastising her publisher, Mr. Nixon, she asked,

Did you consent to sell Science and Health and my works *to those only who would buy and sell my writings*, by a vote on this question of the General Asso. for Dispensing C. S. Literature?... No man or woman has told me of this obnoxious feature but my Father has, and it shall be stopped by His servant who has given His Word to the world not to a privileged monopoly to tyrannize over other writers (*italics added*, but Eddy’s emphasis marked with underline).<sup>643</sup>

Publicly in *The Christian Science Journal*, she corrected the one who instigated the idea: “I consider my students as capable, individually, of selecting their own reading matter and circulating it, as a committee would be which is chosen for this purpose.”<sup>644</sup> To advance such a ‘monopoly’ would have crossed over the fundamentalist line defined by Leone. Eddy’s students then and now are often tempted to cross over the border, in a belief that they are following her instructions to safeguard the exact meaning and purity of her teachings.

### *Threats to Perpetuity*

A further sign of Eddy’s rejection of fundamentalism was her willingness to oversee the translation of her text into German. Leone claims that

most fundamentalist religious cultures reject the idea ...of the translatableness of religious texts, often harshly attacking those who

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<sup>641</sup> Eddy, *Manual of The Mother Church*, 32.

<sup>642</sup> Eddy, *Manual of The Mother Church*, 43.

<sup>643</sup> Mary Baker Eddy to William Nixon, 24 June 1891, Next Friends Exhibit H, Mary Baker Eddy Papers L02668, Mary Baker Eddy Library.

<sup>644</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *The Christian Science Journal*, July 1891, 3.

translate a religious text, or quote a translation of it, or either support or promote the idea that a religious text be translated.<sup>645</sup>

Eddy's successors continue to translate *S&H* into foreign languages. Leone asserts that unwillingness to translate to foreign languages leads to both fundamentalist and universalistic attitudes,<sup>646</sup> and I find the same paradox in the relationship between older and current generations of language shifts.

Every translation is a treason, fundamentalists will say, so that transposing the semantics of the religious text into the expressive plane of a language different from the 'original' one is tantamount to corrupt [sic] it, to introduce human vice where absolute perfection would previously reign.<sup>647</sup>

From an 'insider's' perspective as a CS healer, I understand the desire to cling to *S&H*'s clear guidance toward spiritual growth and correct theology, because I rely on a conviction of its accuracy for my healing practice. However, from an 'outsider's' perspective as a practical theologian, I concur with Leone's conclusion regarding the tension over the boundary of fundamentalist tendencies.

Radicalisation of fundamentalism disrupts communication among differences, and radicalisation of relativism causes the disintegration of similarities. "Human communities anthropologically need both," according to Leone: "they need communication among differences as well as they need communion among similarities."<sup>648</sup>

As noted above, it is more difficult to assess the proximity of *SRJ* readers to their fundamentalist boundary. However, similarities between *SRJ* and *S&H* indicate that *SRJ* may have had a similar ambiguous relationship to fundamentalism: The *SRJ* text was rather widely distributed, from Irenaeus of France to monks in Egypt; it was translated at least from Greek to Coptic; it probably accompanied teachers; it was presented as a revelation to the world; and

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<sup>645</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 233.

<sup>646</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 233.

<sup>647</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 233.

<sup>648</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 238.

it slipped from society's general acceptance. Its wide distribution indicates that at least in its initial reception, its semiotic style must have allowed for sufficient semiotic analysis to encourage communication and coping with differences. Translation into a foreign language most likely indicates an expansive religious culture, although the text could have been translated merely as a demonstration of zeal.<sup>649</sup> The text was likely disseminated through 'schools,' where teachers played an important role in interpretation. And revelation can inspire both hermeneutic rigidity and respect for others' capacity for revelation. However, Leone warns that for the fundamentalist, "the religious text is an *unicum* outside of history, revelation without either communication or signification, so that every attempt to think of it as a language phenomenon is inevitably subject to anathema."<sup>650</sup> Therefore a revelation can appear to transcend all human culture and reject concerns for human conditions. This kind of non-relativistic semiotic ideology tends to impede a 'semiotic style' and undermines semiotic analysis and communication.<sup>651</sup>

A number of factors may have contributed to the disappearance of *SRJ*. It could have been banned as heresy, then hidden in caves for protection; or it could have lost cultural relevance due to hermeneutic rigidity. Whatever forces may have been at play, the semiotic style of *SRJ* appears to have failed to cope with differences within mainstream society. Throughout history many of the ideas in *SRJ* including its message of healing have found alternative expression in other forms of religious thought, including CS. But neither text shows conclusively that they require fundamentalism for success in healing. Although there is evidence that some members of both communities of readers may have slipped into a semiotic style of religious fundamentalism for reasons beyond the teachings of the

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<sup>649</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 233.

<sup>650</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 232.

<sup>651</sup> Leone, "Semiotics of Fundamentalist Authoriality," 237.

texts, it appears that neither of the authors crossed Leone's defined boundary of fundamentalism by commanding strict loyalty to a revelation.

## Theme Two – Where Sin Originates and Manifests in Humanity

Conversation with mainstream Christians about dealing with evil – theme two – generally raises more theological questions than conversation about the characteristics of God – theme one. The most pressing question from orthodox Christians about sin's origin and its manifestation in humanity evokes topics of conversation such as theological anthropology, demonology, and theodicy. The narrow scope of this thesis makes it difficult to delve deeply into these theological issues, but I will bring them into conversation with *SRJ* and *S&H* to demonstrate how listening to widely differing theological perspectives brings more meaning to all conversation partners.

### Theological Anthropology and Responsibility

An anthropological theology proposed by Macquarrie provides a useful link for communication between orthodoxy and Mind-model religions. Acknowledging the ancient disputes between upholders of free will and upholders of determinism, he argues that there is no such thing as total freedom. Sciences appear to support a universal determinism, because they cannot cognise freedom, and even when humans do find freedom, it is always conjoined with finitude. Freedom produces anxiety, because being free is having human care and responsibility. Macquarrie argues that we often hear much about our human 'rights' of freedom, but little about the demands that correlate with every right,

because many are more comfortable with security than freedom and “unconsciously yearn for the untroubled irresponsibility of the womb.”<sup>652</sup>

Both Macquarrie and Eddy approach ‘freedom’ as a responsibility, a gift from God that empowers individuals to choose righteousness, rather than a condemnation from God. They also agree that without freedom (or, choosing good), humanity “has disappeared” (Macquarrie),<sup>653</sup> or is not truly ‘man’ (Eddy). “Man is freeborn,” according to Eddy, “he is neither the slave of sense, nor a silly ambler to the so-called pleasures and pains of self-conscious matter.”<sup>654</sup> Macquarrie distinguishes his theology of free will from orthodoxy as a ‘metaphysical freedom,’ meaning that the “breach between persons and nature occasioned by the emergence of freedom has introduced something which is not empirically observable but is none the less real.”<sup>655</sup> Eddy also considers freedom a metaphysical reality, because “whatever is possible to God, is possible to man as *God’s reflection*.”<sup>656</sup> *SRJ*’s six responses to questions on salvation also depict freedom as a responsibility. Each individual, the Saviour explains, possesses the inherent capacity to be free (or saved), but everyone must opt in through repentance.<sup>657</sup>

The difference between Macquarrie’s view and that of the ‘Mind-model religions’ is still considerable. Eddy’s anthropology insists on the spiritual substance of the image and likeness of God, and Macquarrie envisions humanity conjoined with finitude in some form. But Macquarrie’s ‘not empirically observable’ understanding of freedom is important because it shows how these

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<sup>652</sup> John Macquarrie, *In Search of Humanity: A Theological and Philosophical Approach*. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1982), 18.

<sup>653</sup> Macquarrie, *Search of Humanity*, 21.

<sup>654</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 183.

<sup>655</sup> Macquarrie, *Search of Humanity*, 11.

<sup>656</sup> Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 183.

<sup>657</sup> See discussion on salvation in *SRJ*, Chapter Six, “Second-century Healing and Salvation.”

contrasting views of such contentious subjects can be better understood from both perspectives.

### Modern Demonology Understood in Modern Culture

Ancient demons so palpably present in *SRJ* may not be as ancient as we think when we consider the ways modern Christians experience evil influences. Like most Western Christians, I have envisioned demons as fanciful invisible but personal beings who were believed to enter unseen into humans and cause some measure of harm. According to post-Enlightenment thinking, these entities must have been forms of ancient superstition, because there is no evidence of such beings having inhabited the earth.

Wink challenges this notion, however:

It is merely a habit of thought that makes people think of the Powers<sup>658</sup> as personal beings. In fact, many of the spiritual powers and gods of the ancient world weren't conceived of as personal at all....Humans naturally tend to personalize anything that seems to act intentionally.<sup>659</sup>

*SRJ*'s account of demonic origin and behavior supports Wink's view of impersonal power, which is also consistent with Eddy's views of the origin and behaviour of animal magnetism.<sup>660</sup> Wink's observation that evil influences are not confined to religious imagination creates another bridge for conversation among mainline Christians and readers of *SRJ* and *S&H*. We all function with external powers in every aspect of daily life, he argues. "Religious tradition has often treated the Powers as angelic or demonic beings fluttering about in the sky,"<sup>661</sup> but

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<sup>658</sup> Wink argues that people are influenced by impersonal 'Powers' – whether they are religiously conceived as angelic or demonic (p. 3), or "the institutions and structures that weave society into an intricate fabric of power and relationships" (p. 1) Walter Wink, *Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Galilee Doubleday, 1998), 1,3.

<sup>659</sup> Wink, *Powers that Be*, 27.

<sup>660</sup> See discussion on animal magnetism in *S&H*, Chapter Five, "Evil identified."

<sup>661</sup> Wink, *Powers that Be*, 3.



those angels are what we might today refer to as the ethos, spirit or essence of a corporate personality of a church, government, or business enterprise.

Where do these spirits, ethos, or demons come from? The author of *SRJ*, who represents the voice of the Saviour, tells us that the Chief Demon, Yaldabaoth, created and instructed the demons to attack and manipulate according to his will. But when the demons ('Rulers') deceived Adam in paradise, the Saviour told Adam where he was, instructing him specifically to save himself from the suffering the demons had devised for him: "And the Rulers took him and they placed him in paradise. And they said to him, 'Eat' that is in idleness. For indeed their delight is bitter and their beauty is licentious (20:1-3). ...But as for me [the Saviour], I set them right so that they would eat" (20:22). Demons were deeply involved in daily life, and they affected every function of the human body and of the social and political body, and the Saviour knew exactly how to solve the problems they created.

Eddy claims that the origin of evil spirits is "mortal mind," which exposes its own falsity and ultimately yields to the divine Mind: "Mortal mind, acting from the basis of sensation in matter, is animal magnetism; but this so-called mind, from which comes all evil, contradicts itself, and must finally yield to the eternal Truth, or the divine Mind, expressed in Science."<sup>662</sup> These evil forces affect our daily lives, and the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H* see them as contradictions to the presence and power of God in our present human experiences. Both texts treat evil as an external influence or power. Evil spirits can overwhelm an individual's soul and body but a saviour who is familiar with the identity of the attackers and calls them by name can rescue the individual.

Horsley agrees that the demons of antiquity should no longer be dismissed as psychological phenomena, such as hysteria, neurosis, or schizophrenia, but he

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<sup>662</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 178.

makes an important distinction between modern interpretations such as inner conflicts and the ancient belief in the invasion of external forces.<sup>663</sup> His etiology demonstrates how a ‘meaning-centered’ medical anthropology<sup>664</sup> recognises illness as culturally constructed. Those in his study of African people who dealt with alien influences (spirits) through ceremonies of diagnosis, negotiation, and exorcism, were better able to deal with European colonialism than were those who were less acquainted with spirit possession. Horsley’s argument that “power-relations ...determine sickness and the possibility of healing”<sup>665</sup> provides another angle from which to view the *SRJ* and *S&H* non-medically based etiologies. *SRJ*’s concern with the world rulers,<sup>666</sup> also called demons, claimed full authority over the creation and function of every portion of the human body. And if these demons are conceived like a ‘spirit of sickness’ rather than personal beings, then these demons also behave as Eddy conceived them.

Wink, Horsley, and Eddy agree that demons were not and are not personal beings, and as I have argued, Eddy’s treatment of animal magnetism is similar to *SRJ*’s use of demons. She counseled healers to “speak to disease as one having authority over it,”<sup>667</sup> but not because the disease was a personality. She meant it is a type of exorcism that alters the healer’s relationship to a demon. Who or what is the healer talking to? From a purely physical point of view, a disease has no self-directed intelligence, but if disease presents itself as a suggestion that is believable only to one who fears it, then the sufferer could ‘speak’ to it as one speaks to a nightmare or a case of nerves. Eddy explains further,

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<sup>663</sup> Horsley, "My Name is Legion," 41.

<sup>664</sup> Horsley explains that critical medical anthropology developed in response to the spread of western medicine. Criticising the ethnocentric and reductionist attitudes of western bio-medicine, it recognizes illness as culturally constructed. Horsley, "My Name is Legion," 42.

<sup>665</sup> Horsley, "My Name is Legion," 43.

<sup>666</sup> ‘Rulers’ in *SRJ* generally referred to the despised Roman rulers, as described in Chapter Four, “Cultural Context for Creation in *SRJ* and *S&H*.”

<sup>667</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 395.

If the student silently called the disease by name, when he argued against it, as a general rule the body would respond more quickly, — just as a person replies more readily when his name is spoken; but this was because the student was not perfectly attuned to divine Science, and needed the arguments of truth for reminders.<sup>668</sup>

Critics have charged that Eddy's dismissal of the power of sickness is fantasy, but in fact, her concern with the powers of the invisible demons/spirits/ethos is deep. Rather than 'speaking' to nothing, she strives to awaken potential healers to the seriousness of hidden mental forces: "So secret are the present methods of animal magnetism," she writes, "that they ensnare the age into indolence, and produce the very apathy on the subject which the criminal desires."<sup>669</sup> Once identified, animal magnetism must be denounced as powerless before God. Only then can it be classified as "a mere negation, possessing neither intelligence, power, nor reality, and in sense it is an unreal concept of the so-called mortal mind."<sup>670</sup>

Wink's and Horsley's clarification of how people today experience invisible powers or spirits provides insights into how the authors of second- and nineteenth-century texts confronted enemy spirits in their age.

#### Theodicy: an Argument for God's Goodness

Classical theodicy attempts to reconcile the omnipotence and goodness of God with the presence and action of evil. But theologians, such as process theologian Whitehead, generally agreed that the horrors of the twentieth-century experience of holocaust at Auschwitz confirmed the omnipotence of God was an impossibility. Process theology presumes the unprotected reality of the evil

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<sup>668</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 411.

<sup>669</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 102.

<sup>670</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 101.

experience of human suffering and God's co-existence with evil. Conversation with the three texts asks where *SRJ* and *S&H* could claim the supremacy and sovereignty of God – a foundational basis for healing – in light of the arguments of process theology.

Gottschalk, a twentieth-century Christian Scientist, addresses the assumption of evil's existential entity. If

the experience of evil is just what it appears to be: an unchallenged reality against which other realities are to be measured, ...is the same factual quality [the experience of evil], a quality of unmistakable authenticity and concreteness, attributed to humanity's experience of God? Here is the crux of the problem, which turns out to be not so much the problem of evil in the classic formulation as that of the immediacy of this God-experience and the evaluation of its meaning.<sup>671</sup>

The "experience of God" grounds the theology of *SRJ* and *S&H*, as both claim the reality of God as the starting point. For both authors, experiencing God is a praise of God for the fullness, goodness, and power through which God cares for and governs humanity. Such knowledge of God overthrows the works of the devil (as in *SRJ*), or the human sense of suffering disease (as in *S&H*). But Gottschalk cites Barth's discussion of the nature of evil in his third volume of *Church Dogmatics* to contrast it with Eddy's meaning of the immediacy of the God-experience, arguing that Barth

"does not move from the problem of theodicy back to the understanding of God; rather he moves out from the conviction that in the light of the revealed and experienceable reality of a sovereign and good God, evil *must* be described – both with respect to its ontological status and its operative character – in terms of its sheer negation, as what he calls 'das Nichtige.'"<sup>672</sup>

In this regard, *SRJ* and *S&H* agree that the character of evil is 'sheer negation.'

King's critique of traditional views of the nature of evil in extracanonical texts strikes a similar theme:

the uncompromising censure of worldly power is so radical that some have said that 'Gnosticism' faded away or merely hardened into anachronism

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<sup>671</sup> Stephen Gottschalk, "Theodicy After Auschwitz and The Reality of God," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* XLI, nos. 3 & 4 (1987): 79.

<sup>672</sup> Gottschalk, "Theodicy After Auschwitz," 81.

because its radical negation could not support a positive new order. I would suggest rather that a text like the *Secret Revelation of John* was rejected not because it was too ‘otherworldly,’ but because it was too utopian in its aspirations and too unremitting in its critique of violence and injustice.<sup>673</sup>

Eddy also holds to the “uncompromising censure of worldly power” which is expressed in the form of disease, violence, and corrupt government through demonic (animal magnetism) influences. Gottschalk summarises Eddy’s theodicy:

For her the question of evil could only be answered at the existential level of *demonstration* of the sovereignty of God through the *act* of reducing evil to its ‘native nothingness’. The only terms in which the problem of evil can be resolved are therefore inseparable from the actual process through which evil is destroyed.<sup>674</sup>

When terrorists strike or loved ones struggle with illness, the theological position of radical sovereignty keeps open the possibility of moving forward with a harmonious resolution. There is another way to tell the story, or to conceive the meaning of the situation. Consciousness of radical sovereignty is where terrorism *fails* to terrorise, or illness *fails* to dominate. It is in that same sense that orthodox Christians would probably agree that the apparent failure of Jesus’s mission as seen in his crucifixion was overturned by the reality of his victory – through his resurrection – over the powers that attempted to destroy him.<sup>675</sup>

### The Cross: a Critique

Mainline Christians often mistake CS for a type of New Thought (or New Age) religious tradition, but what distinguishes the two is the importance of the cross in CS theology and practice. In fact, Eddy agreed with the common criticism

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<sup>673</sup> King, *Secret Revelation of John*, 171.

<sup>674</sup> Gottschalk, “Theodicy After Auschwitz,” 79. Eddy uses the phrase several times to express her understanding of the origin of evil. See *Science and Health*, 281, for example.

<sup>675</sup> Frank Seeburger, *The Open Wound: Trauma, Identity, and Community* (self-published, 2012), 272.

that the claim of spiritual perfection can be used incorrectly as an excuse for sinful beliefs and behaviours and can cause the ‘sinner’ to overlook the real Christian transformation required. She rebuked her own followers who fell into such self-righteous delusion, but she did not back away from the essential spiritual law that healed both sickness and sin. *Real* obedience to these spiritual laws would require a true relationship with the cross.

The cross is “the central emblem of history,” she wrote. “It is the lodestar in the demonstration of Christian healing, – the demonstration by which sin and sickness are destroyed.”<sup>676</sup> Healing is impossible without participating in the cross of Jesus, she asserts, because it crucifies the belief in an ego apart from God’s creative work. The cross is never mentioned in *SRJ*, but it is not entirely fair to judge a work by what it does not include. Repentance, which might be considered a form of cross-bearing, was an essential requirement of *SRJ* theology of salvation.<sup>677</sup>

However, in the twenty-first century, this teaching has faded among many of Eddy’s followers. Christian Scientists are often surprised to learn that Eddy wanted to be seen and known with her cross and asked at least seven artists to add her diamond cross to a famous drawing, whereas today, most Christian Scientists would be uncomfortable wearing a cross, believing its symbolism loses the ‘original perfection’ image of CS teaching. It is my observation that downplaying the role of the cross in contemporary CS practice contributes to an attitude of

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<sup>676</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 238.

<sup>677</sup> See discussion in Chapter Six, “Repentance,” on the importance of repentance in *SRJ* theology.

denominational arrogance, confusion about its own Christian identity, and a weakening of one's healing success.

Although there are important theological distinctions between orthodoxy and the texts under discussion, the conversation reveals a number of bridges and means for deeper understanding. Despite the contrasting epistemologies, both groups appear to agree on several theological points: a theological basis for free will, the influence of evil spirits, the fact that evil *can* be overcome at least to a degree, and that fact that the cross is the central emblem of Christianity.

### Theme Three – Healing and Salvation in the Context of Modern Medicine

While in this thesis the conversation about healing among the three texts has taken place within the context of salvation, most mainline Christians think of healing within the context of modern medicine. This contextual influence on the meaning of healing is one of the reasons we tend to talk past each other. But identifying these differences gives meaning to the broader conversation for all parties.

#### Evidence of Healing in Antiquity

Whereas the last chapter of *S&H* is composed of one hundred pages of testimonials from people who were healed by reading the book, there are no direct accounts of healing in *SRJ*. Does this lack of healing examples in *SRJ* imply that no healing activity took place, that no record was ever made, that the theology of healing had no practical import, or that its theory was not efficacious? There could be a number of reasons for the difference. For example, I am not aware of any particular genre in antiquity that combined testimonials with a theory or

teaching; it may have been a nineteenth-century idea to promote an object with testimonials incorporated in the object itself.

However, the lack of specific healing accounts raises the question of whether *SRJ* defends and explains a contemporary practice of healing, or whether it proposes a *new* understanding of healing, along with its correlative message of salvation and hope for people being persecuted by unjust rulers. Evidence of healing in the first couple of centuries CE exists, but a direct relation between historic healing experiences and the theology of *SRJ* remains speculative. On the other hand, numerous healing accounts do appear in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, especially the *Acts of John*, accompanied in some cases by theological explanations. In many ways, this theology resembles *SRJ*. But these *Acts* are composed in a romance genre, where fiction, fantasy and realism are so blurred that it is beyond the scope of my research to determine the historical veracity of these healing accounts.

Other evidence of healing works appears in the writings of competing authors of the period, such as Irenaeus versus ‘the *gnosticoi*’ (gnostic people). While both admit the existence of the other’s healing works, they vigorously denounce each other’s theological authority, truth and moral integrity. And neither side refers with specificity to any historic accounts of healing. For instance, Irenaeus complains of the false sources cited by those who are said to perform miracles,

Moreover, those also will be thus confuted who belong to Simon and Carpocrates,<sup>678</sup> and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles – who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by the means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray.<sup>679</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> Logan notes that Simon the Magician and Carpocrates are among those who are “alleged predecessors of the school of Valentinus,” including Menander, Saturninus, and Basilides as well. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 49.

<sup>679</sup> Irenaeus, *A Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called*, Book II, Chap. XXXI,



Their mutual accusations of healing by false means are reminiscent of my own difficulties finding language to use with my contemporaries. Irenaeus and his opponents accused each other of practising magic and claimed themselves to be the *true* Christian healers. And until I learned to explain invisible but active epistemological differences, I also experienced mutual misunderstandings about the means and meaning of healing.

It is possible to conclude that the ancient concepts of healing and salvation are so radically different from modern thought it is impossible for us to discern their meaning from within our modern paradigm. For instance, Pilch argues that outsiders, such as those of us entrenched in a Western biomedical worldview, cannot truly interpret the reality of an insider group, such as the Gospel writers of the first century:

Modern Western investigators must suspend their biomedical understandings and assumptions in reading the Gospel....The ancients...view lack of health as illness, that is, as a socially disvalued condition or state that involves and affects many others besides the stricken individual.<sup>680</sup>

Pilch's reference to a socially disvalued condition reflects his distinction between biomedicine and ethnomedicine. Biomedicine "places primary emphasis on biological symptoms and pathogens," whereas ethnomedicine "places primacy on the culturally construed causes of illness. It views medical problems as sociocultural phenomena and therefore as culturally definable."<sup>681</sup>

Perhaps, then, the passions, demons, salvation, body, cosmic rulers of antiquity all have a meaning different from our contemporary understanding. But I do not think such differences negate all that we can understand of healing in antiquity. I use these examples to indicate that the meaning of healing in *S&H* is

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2,3, as quoted in Frank C. Darling, *Biblical Healing: Hebrew and Christian Roots* (Boulder, CO: Vista Publications, 1989), 111.

<sup>680</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 76.

<sup>681</sup> Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 58.

likely to be different from its meaning in *SRJ*, and consequently, even different from our understanding in the twenty-first century. But since even Irenaeus admits that his enemies actually healed, *SRJ* could have been used as a textbook for healing even though it did not include a section devoted to testimonials.

### Medicine versus Spiritual Healing

Medicine and spiritual healing have always coexisted in tension with each other. Jesus did not heal with medicine, and he sent his disciples out to heal in his name. Did God send physicians to humanity even though Jesus did not use medicine? Medicine was widely practised among Jesus's followers during and after his time. Porterfield describes swings throughout Christian history between the Christian emphasis on spiritual (non-medical) healing and support for healing through medical means.<sup>682</sup> This fluctuation between systems expands the conversation between the 'Mind-model religions' and 'social-model religions' to include a wide variety of theological perspectives that influence healing practices. Some Christians claim, for example, that illness and even death are God's will, and that we should not interfere; others say God gave us medicine, and we should use God's gift; and of course non-Christians argue that medicine is not a Christian possession. Because medicine played no role in salvation in *SRJ* or *S&H*, it has no voice in their healing methods either.

But neither Mind-based healing practices nor bio-medicine has a perfect success record, and a critical conversation between the two yields insights for all healers. The negative sides of both systems are well known, but they should be acknowledged briefly. The best medical technology and best drugs are available only to the wealthiest; medicine usually has negative side-effects; it bears no correlation to salvation; and it often generates *more* fear of diseases. CS treatment

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<sup>682</sup> Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*. The entire monograph demonstrates this point.

requires the utmost spiritual maturity, and even then it is sometimes difficult; when healings are slow, it is confusing to know when (or why or how) to seek medical support. Of course quacks are detrimental to both systems.

Many faithful Christians who depend on medical technology and pharmacology also want intercessory prayer. But Eddy argues that the two systems do not support each other through combinative procedures. They function, in her view, more like the two contrasting epistemological systems of theology, where one contradicts the other. She is not opposed to the existence of other views, but her concern is that an attempt to mix systems results in a transfer of faith from the healing power of Mind to Godless human technologies, thereby forfeiting the efficacious ‘medicine’ of God/Mind.

One distinction between *SRJ* and *S&H* is Eddy’s detailed rationale for excluding medical remedies in the context of spiritual healing. *SRJ* makes no particular reference to medicine but demonstrates salvation from all human trouble through the work of the God-sent saviours. Eddy’s explicit distinction between the two systems explains the functionality of God as Mind in the non-medical healing process:

Which was first, Mind or medicine? If Mind was first and self-existent, then Mind, not matter, must have been the first medicine. God being All-in-all, He made medicine; but that medicine was Mind. It could not have been matter, which departs from the nature and character of Mind, God. ... Hence the fact that, to-day, as yesterday, Christ casts out evils and heals the sick.<sup>683</sup>

On the other hand, Eddy did not expect healers to be ready to handle all cases with assurance while they were learning to heal. She appreciated the support of the medical community, especially for those who were not sufficiently advanced in their spiritual understanding to effect healing in more difficult situations. She counsels her readers:

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<sup>683</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 142.

Until the advancing age admits the efficacy and supremacy of Mind, it is better for Christian Scientists to leave surgery and the adjustment of broken bones and dislocations to the fingers of a surgeon, while the mental healer confines himself chiefly to mental reconstruction and to the prevention of inflammation. Christian Science is always the most skilful surgeon, but surgery is the branch of its healing which will be last acknowledged.<sup>684</sup>

She states the facts of a healing science, but she does not advocate extremism.

‘Conversation’ may be more effective than ‘mixing’ in conveying the proper interaction between Eddy’s theologically scientific system of healing and the modern medically scientific system. Eddy considered Jesus the perfect demonstrator of the Science of Christ,<sup>685</sup> whereas medical law was based on a contradictory science of health laws. Therefore ‘mixing’ implies the improper blending of dissimilar properties; conversation provides additional information/insight so that the patient can make better decisions *between* those properties without diminishing their differences. Each system agrees that the other may occasionally provide assistance, but asserts the fundamental authority of its own scientific laws. Conversation, which draws on PT’s living human web,<sup>686</sup> helps healers discern a bigger picture. For example, a Christian Scientist who seeks surgery from a physician will strive to focus on ‘mental reconstruction,’ because the patient is still faithful to perfecting his or her own demonstration of the divine Science. Likewise, ‘medical miracles’ can be attributed to hope and spiritual peace from a divine source, while the physician continues to perfect his or her practice of medical science. The web metaphor illustrates the complexity of the relationship between systems. Conversation aids in discovering how they can mutually assist each other, even while each maintains its own integrity.

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<sup>684</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 401-2.

<sup>685</sup> She claimed, for example that “Jesus of Nazareth was the most scientific man that ever trod the globe.” Eddy, *Science and Health*, 313.

<sup>686</sup> See discussion of the living human web in Chapter Two, “The Meaning of the ‘Web’ in Current PT Methodology.”

At times, Eddy explicitly recommended conversation with experts within the medical community. One of her Church By-laws invites such conversation: “And it shall be the privilege of a Christian Scientist to confer with an M.D. on Ontology, or the Science of being.”<sup>687</sup> However, despite these instructions for Eddy’s students, in practice I have not known a CS practitioner to consult with an M.D. on the subject of ontology or the Science of being. Fortunately, over the past few decades, I *have* observed greater care among both patients and practitioners to acknowledge their own limitations in difficult cases. They have sought clearer communication and medical help, especially with children’s cases, when their prayers have not achieved sufficiently quick results. Medical practice is not always a fail-safe back-up for spiritual healers, nor are spiritual healers able to guarantee a fail-safe back-up for medical practitioners. Not only is supporting and learning from each other instructive, but it humbles the prideful temptation to claim the superiority of any one practice. Humility aids all healers.

PT criticises ‘applied theology’ for its conforming a current situation to an understanding of an outgrown past,<sup>688</sup> and that critique raises another issue for conversation with CS healing practice. A tenet of CS is to seek guidance for eternal life from the inspired Word of the Bible, and *S&H* is regarded as the necessary interpretation. Thus, students of CS strive to apply laws from an authorised text or tradition, which some could consider an outgrown past, to a current circumstance. But here is a case where these two contradictory worldviews can benefit from each other in conversation. Because CS healing practice starts with God – the healing characteristics of God – the Word of God in these texts inspires and heals. In this way this practice challenges traditional models to make more

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<sup>687</sup> Eddy, *Manual of The Mother Church*, 47.

<sup>688</sup> Hiltner argues that although the study of past texts results in principles that must applied, the process moves the other way also, that adequate critical study of other perspectives makes valuable contributions to theological understanding. Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 31.

space for God as the starting cause and source of healing action. On the other hand, the value of PT's teaching to start with an individual circumstance (rather than a text) is that the human experience is prioritised and people are not asked to conform to a historical ideological viewpoint. I acknowledge the value of the 'applied theology' warning not to slip into conformity to a past paradigm by leaning on a text alone for a model. Even experienced Christian Scientists are tempted to 'use CS' as an applied theology, which dampens their spiritual growth and successful practice.

PT has often been referred to as a 'two-way street' since Hiltner argued that Tillich's 'correlation' should fully incorporate the dual passageways.<sup>689</sup> The 'street' runs between culture and faith, or between the current situation and tradition. But the action-guiding worldview that conceives God/Spirit/Mind as the active cause presents a triangular dimension, relating God, Scriptures, and healer, and acting through God's initiative. God causes both transformation of the present situation and renewal of one's relation to Scripture. Hearing both views in conversation raises thoughtful questions: Should a healer study the human circumstance more thoroughly in order to know God's practical relevance to the situation? From an ethical perspective, how long should one expect to grow spiritually while waiting for the healing, if medicine might produce a quicker cure? What is God's relationship with medicine, when it privileges the wealthy, and does not always succeed? Finally, does medicine retard faith in God?

### *Epigenetics*

Lipton's research in the new science of Epigenetics suggests an alternative model of medical study that could bridge these two healing systems. He is a

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<sup>689</sup> Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, p. 223, as quoted in Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 158.

renowned cell biologist who proposed a new approach to medical study using a scientific system that accommodates the possibility of mental healing power. His demonstration of Epigenetics (literally, ‘control above the genes’) upends our conventional understanding of genetic control, by showing that our genes “are constantly being remodeled in response to life experiences.” Or, more directly, “our *perceptions* of life shape our biology.”<sup>690</sup> Lipton admits his own medical profession lags far behind physicists who have adopted the findings of quantum research. Furthermore, medicine’s persistent dependence on Newtonian physics may be partly fueled by the income generated from increased dependence on drugs. “The overuse of prescription drugs provides a vacation from personal responsibility.”<sup>691</sup> But realising that our genes are constantly being remodelled in response to life experiences, he claims we no longer need to be victims of genetics or Darwinian evolution.

Lipton’s account of his personal “euphoric moment of insight”<sup>692</sup> is comparable to Eddy’s revelatory moment of discovery that Science leads to spiritual reality. Lipton also agrees with a belief from antiquity that all the components of the universe are unified, as he claims is true in quantum physics: “we are part of a whole and ... we forget this at our peril.”<sup>693</sup> He even agrees with a spiritual component of our being: “The latest science leads us to a worldview not unlike that held by the earliest civilizations, in which every material object in nature was thought to possess a spirit. ...When Science turned away from Spirit, its mission dramatically changed.”<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> Bruce H. Lipton, *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles* (New York: Hay House, 2008), xv.

<sup>691</sup> Lipton, *Biology of Belief*, 82.

<sup>692</sup> Lipton, *Biology of Belief*, 154.

<sup>693</sup> Lipton, *Biology of Belief*, 159.

<sup>694</sup> Lipton, *Biology of Belief*, 155.

However, he diverges from both *SRJ* and *S&H* when he concludes that we are made of protein, rather than the image (and likeness) of Spirit. As protein, he writes, “we are made in the image of the environment, that environment being the Universe, or to many, God.”<sup>695</sup> Although the substance of creation differs between Lipton and the authors of *SRJ* and *S&H*, all three authors concur that the act of creation originates from the one God/Mind/Spirit, and creation is the object of this ‘environment.’ All three authors agree that human beings are not made of the deterministic substance of unintelligent, uncaring genes, and Epigenetics therefore joins the conversation on medicine sharing elements of the other two systems.

#### Contribution from Liberation Theology

Liberation theology contributes another dimension to the conversation on medicine, because, while it seeks to liberate – or ‘heal’ the wounds of – those who experience systemic oppression, it also calls on theologians and healers to respond to the contextual experiences of people and rejects essentialising.<sup>696</sup> The liberation theology idea of systemic healing should be compatible with Eddy’s theology, on the grounds that salvation cannot occur outside the context of socialisation. The ‘perfect Human’ cannot be “an isolated, solitary idea, for he represents infinite Mind, the sum of all substance.”<sup>697</sup> But elements of liberation theology can also strengthen the practice of CS healing. Liberation theology’s opposition to essentialising can benefit healers who wrongly presume all healings must follow a certain human pattern. And its respect for the attachments of all humans can also

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<sup>695</sup> Lipton, *Biology of Belief*, 159.

<sup>696</sup> Essentialising is the theory that an irreducible essence is to be found in all humans; it is rejected by liberation theologians on the grounds that all persons have attachments of many kinds, and essentialising minimises the uniqueness of each individual’s attachments. Stephen Pattison, “Spirituality and Spiritual Care Made Simple: A Suggestive, Normative and Essentialist Approach.” *Practical Theology* 3, no. 3 (2010): 354.

<sup>697</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, 259.



benefit healers who may pay too little attention to the human circumstance, a problem that may have contributed to its weak record in racial justice.

The fundamentalist tendency that excludes communication or edification from others continues to interfere with CS discourse outside its bubble. Concern that the intrusion of materialistic theories will dilute CS theology stems from anxiety over losing the power to heal. Such concern is not altogether unfounded, as Eddy demonstrates in her thorough distinction between Mind-healing and classical physics-based healing. It is easier to slip into a sensuous, self-oriented thought mode than to pray continuously for unselfish participation in God's spiritual realm. But healthy conversation corrects the false conclusion that respecting the meaningful relations of others dilutes one's private relationship with God. On the contrary, by valuing the meaning of another's experience the healer gains a heightened understanding of Mind's infinite manifestation.

The second obstacle uncovered in conversation with liberation theology is the theologically difficult admission that 'hearing' human voices from social and political situations might benefit someone seeking knowledge only from God. Christian Scientists strive, in the words of Luther, to heed no 'other voices.'<sup>698</sup> But again, this fear of hearing tainted voices is misplaced, since praising God with profound devotion need not exclude the depth and breadth of learning from the unique way Christ is working in every human being and in every human condition. The *Christian Science Monitor*, the newspaper established by Eddy in 1907 after *S&H* had been published, was designed to link the spiritual laws of being with the current issues of the world. Individual prayer was not to be confined to private benefits, but to bless humanity, and journalists for the *Christian Science Monitor* often talk of seeking Christ at work in the midst of all types of human situations throughout the world. Finding Christ in the lives and

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<sup>698</sup> CS congregations often sing, "Our Lord is God alone, No other power we own; No other voice we heed, No other help we need; His kingdom is forever." Frederick Root, *Christian Science Hymnal*. (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1932), Hymn 10, verse 2.

words of those who know nothing of CS should enable faithful Christian Scientists to 'hear' the minority voices of those from other socio-political parts of the world.

Liberation theology and CS use contradictory sources of knowledge for their healing remedies, but in conversation, they benefit each other. CS healers can become more aware of their unintended participation in oppressive behaviours and become more willing to benefit from hearing minority voices. Often those who live in less privileged communities are more faithful, more resilient, and more humble – qualities needed for successful healing. And those who seek knowledge only from human experience may benefit from a deeper awareness of God's loving presence and guidance in their care for humanity.

PT methodology is credited in this chapter with arranging for a critical conversation that allowed for the expected enriching and transforming results. By first recognising the contradictory epistemologies, I was able to step out of my own worldview and adopt a perspectival view, allowing both voices to bring forth their own arguments. Davies's claim that these two perspectives are incompatible misses the means by which they can converse and benefit each other. Understanding the reasons for the other's epistemological standpoint helps both sides recognise commonalities such as their mutual commitment to healing and helping others, and their Christian devotion to God and moral living. The enriching feature of the critical conversation is that the topics selected for discussion would not have surfaced in conversations among those who share similar worldviews. Respecting the source of differences in epistemological views rather than assuming immoral or anti-Christian motives helps each side value the other's contributions to the greater good.

## Chapter Nine: Drawing Conclusions

In my concluding remarks, I defend my thesis – that a critical conversation on *how* non-medical healing occurs in the Christian teachings of *SRJ* and *S&H* would yield meaningful healing insights to those inside and outside the communities of those who practise these healing methods. The bubble restricting the Christian Science conversation with the world that I mentioned in the introduction can disintegrate with the proper structure of a critical conversation. As the *separating* function of the bubble dissolves, the conversation enhances the meaning of Christ-healing for those who have never experienced it as well as those who live with it consistently. On the other hand, as the *protecting* function of the bubble dissolves, the conversation becomes complex and even disturbing for those who have never considered the viability of these contradictory action-guiding worldviews. I argue the benefits outweigh the difficulties. The PT methodology which was selected to open channels of communication is also evaluated.

In this chapter I first identify the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the thesis claims. Then I will name the benefits of this research for categories of interested people mentioned in the introduction of the thesis. Finally I will identify the questions that emerge from the conversation and where the conversation might lead in the future.

The greatest strength of this thesis is that it identifies a means of making the healing ideas in *SRJ* and *S&H* more accessible to contemporary Christian thought. Its use of PT methodology was not a perfect fit at the outset, because the thesis required an understanding of an epistemology that contradicted the premise upon which PT operates. It also required my adjustment from being an autoethnographic conversation partner on the inside to providing a perspectival approach on the outside. But the PT methodology exposed the problems and successfully accommodated both the epistemological contradictions and the need

for my adjustment because it respects all experiential situations. Even though the theological position of ‘Mind-model religions’ devalues sociological and psychological viewpoints – from which ‘social-model religions’ draw heavily – the PT approach gives the Mind-model position a place in the conversation. Also the discovery of a strangely similar theological message in both the second and nineteenth centuries presents an unusual perspective on *how* healing happened (or happens) on a Christian basis without sharing a common knowledge of science.

The greatest weakness of this thesis is the insufficiency of its scope. It cannot identify and vet all the theological difficulties that surface in a conversation that covers such vast theological, cultural, and religious topics. The conversation relies on knowledge of topics as diverse as quantum mechanics, gender studies, creation and evolution, sociological and psychological studies of religion, heresiology, Hellenistic culture, nineteenth-century American culture, etiology, theories of health and wholeness, theological views of salvation, Greek and Coptic languages, the role of language, CS healing practices, and PT – in addition to knowledge of the two historical texts, *SRJ* and *S&H*. Also, the contradictory epistemologies, which I claim are not incompatible, do cause difficulties. One could question whether I succeeded in fulfilling two distinct roles in conversation – my own worldview for conversation among the texts and the PT perspectival role in conversation with other Christian views.

## Beneficiaries of the Thesis Research

### 1. Anyone Interested in a Theological Basis for Christian Healing

Christians are usually familiar with Jesus’s commission to his disciples to preach the gospel and to heal the sick (*Matt 10:5-8*). They devote themselves to evangelising and preaching to the world, and many also serve the sick unselfishly in hospitals and hospices. But many still wonder: “*How* do we heal the sick?” *SRJ*

and *S&H* propose challenging but logically clear theologies that suggest answers to the question. Future researchers may learn more about the practices and successes of followers of *SRJ*, but we have abundant evidence of practices and successes (and failures) of followers of *S&H*. Despite a less than perfect record of healing, health has returned to many, lives have been saved, and souls restored for those who have followed CS teachings for healing. To conduct a medical study on the success of CS healing would be as useless as an attempt to analyse the success of physics by placing random individuals who are not necessarily educated in physics in a science laboratory environment, and asking them to carry out a demonstration of an already proven physical law. Anyone with sufficient learning, moral strength, and experience can prove the rule of physics or healing; it takes patience and persistence.

With abductive reasoning, we can discern the simplest theory that fits all the data. Although it is not in compliance with classical physics, medical science, or probably most human opinions, CS theology offers the simplest explanation for *how* healing happens without medicine, why a placebo works, and why people have near-death experiences. Paul admonished his followers to seek the simplicity in Christ: “I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve in his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (*2 Cor* 11:3). The simplicity of CS healing is that the God/Mind who created humanity, pronouncing it ‘very good,’ is the same God/Mind that continues to govern and care for it. Prayer is the process by which humans yield their own fears of evil, sinful temptations, doubts in God, and beliefs in classical physics to Christ’s awakening power.

## 2. Scholars Seeking Healing Insights from Nag Hammadi Literature

The remarkable discovery of four copies of the *Secret Revelation of John* after it had disappeared for many centuries shocked the academic and religious worlds a few decades ago, but now that it has been translated and analysed to a degree, its messages are reaching new readers. Hearing its voice in conversation with *S&H* and with my contemporary healing practice, I see how it will continue to startle Christian Scientists and any other Christians who are interested in its healing message. In this thesis I have tried to allow the text to speak for itself in conversation with *S&H*, with me, and with the broader contemporary community. But, having heard its voice, I need to comment on the difficulty modern readers still have when they engage with a text that rose from the ashes of the second century. The astonishment we (all Christians, including Christian Scientists) feel when reading *SRJ* results from both its surprising message of healing and our need to navigate new waters if we want to accommodate this early writing in our own normative view of Christian theology and tradition.

Addressing our own hesitations to converse with the text, it is necessary to acknowledge the role of the history of scholarship. Research seeking insights into healing has exposed and questioned the distortions that arise from Gnostic caricatures, distortions which mar our view of healing and theology. Another hermeneutical influence that has interfered with our willingness and ability to hear the voice of *SRJ* is the weighty influence of what King identifies as the Christian ‘master story.’<sup>699</sup> But the removal of these blinders enables us to discover a wider interpretation of ancient Christian thought and practice, especially as it concerns healing theologies and practices.

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<sup>699</sup> King labels the Christian teaching of an unbroken chain teaching right belief in the pure doctrine through his apostles, guaranteeing unity and uniformity of Christian belief and practice, ‘the master story.’ *Mary of Magdala: First Woman Apostle*, 159.

The fact that *SRJ* appears prominently in the writings of antiquity<sup>700</sup> prompts King and other scholars to stress the need to revisit the relationships between the texts comprising the Nag Hammadi library and the sources that contributed to defining normative Christianity:

Gnosticism was substituted for heresy as the object of the discourse. The functions of this object were transformed, at times working to establish Christian identity.... Yet the function of this discourse has remained unchanged: to represent the other. The study of Gnosticism is thus imbricated in intellectual discourses and power relations that extend far beyond any notion of disinterested objectivity and often far beyond the explicit intentions of individual scholars.<sup>701</sup>

It is therefore impossible to disconnect the association of certain characteristics found in some ancient extracanonical texts from the intellectual discourse among Christians in the first three centuries. However, as many scholars now agree, the presumption of heresy misleads and distorts the framework of a proper analysis. Brakke argues, for example, that the ideas and practices of the ‘other’ should be more deeply considered as part of the ongoing development of Christianity. In fact, the notion of a monolithic and perfect form of Christianity, which many modern churches aspire to emulate, is giving way to the realisation that multiple early Christ movements contributed to the whole.<sup>702</sup>

As numerous scholars<sup>703</sup> have now made clear, each text in antiquity must be analysed in relation to its own context and purpose in order to discern its meaning on a particular subject. The uniqueness of these texts substantiates Brakke’s proposal that in antiquity multiple Christianities competed and cooperated with each other. The fourth century attempt to define a monolithic and perfect form of Christianity served the patriarchal purpose of the Roman

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<sup>700</sup> *SRJ* is the only text in the collection of tractates found in the Nag Hammadi caves that appears three times; another version was discovered earlier in the ‘Berlin Codex’; and Church Father Irenaeus devoted considerable effort to denouncing it.

<sup>701</sup> King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 219.

<sup>702</sup> Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 136.

<sup>703</sup> Key contemporary scholars arguing this point are Michael Williams, Karen King, Hal Taussig, David Brakke, Ismo Dunderberg, and others.

Empire, but Christians continued to re-evaluate their ever evolving relations to the earliest oral traditions and ancient texts. Not surprisingly, such an evolutionary process continues today. Dunderberg emphasises the uselessness of conversation between orthodoxy and heresy, because it misses the essential theological and Christian character of the relationship between the two. “I bid farewell to the discourse of orthodoxy and heresy, which can be seen in the ways scholars have used the term ‘Gnosticism,’” he proclaims. “... King and Williams have dramatically changed our understanding of what we are after in examining the materials traditionally classified as Gnostic.”<sup>704</sup> I have taken advantage of this departure to be able to focus on the substantive theological message of hope, healing, and salvation in *SRJ*.

### 3. Christian Scientists Seeking Conversation

This thesis is the first modern study on the *healing theology* of *S&H*. Most scholarship on CS concerns Mary Baker Eddy, or engages in polemical writing to compare its doctrinal theology with other apologetics. Scholarship on *SRJ* has also focused predominantly on heretical concerns or historical and feminist approaches, but scholars admit little has been said concerning its specific theology of non-medical healing. This thesis makes several larger contributions to theological knowledge related to healing. Scholars of both early Christianity and nineteenth-century Christianity can benefit from the conversation between these texts, because the thesis isolates the texts from their typical Christian identity disputes, allowing readers to discover the texts’ own self-understanding of their contributions to the Christian mission. Also because my own epistemological viewpoint is more consistent with the historical texts than that of orthodox Christian researchers, I am able to ask different theological questions of *SRJ*. PT’s

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<sup>704</sup> Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 14.



claim that no one can approach a text independent of prior assumptions validates the value of my hermeneutic outside the context of orthodoxy and heresy.

Since, according to *SRJ* and *S&H*, healing is dependent on closeness to God, a proper understanding of healing exceeds the boundaries of academics where the issues of the soul (such as one's moral integrity, faith, or unselfishness) cannot be fully evaluated. But both texts combine theological reasoning with revelation, so their reasoning is subject to academic analysis. Eddy is conscious of the logic of her arguments, and the structure of John's 'secret revelation' consists of answered questions. Their healing theologies afford mainstream Christians another way to conceive the meaning of Jesus's commission to his disciples to heal the sick, as well as to preach the gospel. The power to heal need not be left in the hands of mystery or ultimately harmful pharmaceuticals or medical technology. Three key ideas for Christians who are not accustomed to healing without medicine surface from the conversation: (1) the idea that spiritual healing can be so closely associated with salvation gives more meaning and relevance to the spiritual experience of healing; (2) the desire to seek all healing through God alone strengthens one's view of God's unfailing love and power; and (3) the attitude of practising healing consistently lessens the belief in victimisation.

The existence of an ancient text structured on a worldview with a correlation of healing and salvation strangely similar to Eddy's *S&H* is surprising news to Christian Scientists, especially since neither author knew of the other. For a Christian Scientist who expects to discover something about "primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing,"<sup>705</sup> or who knows of Eddy's enthusiasm for her own discovery of the *Sayings of Jesus*,<sup>706</sup> however, the connection serves as an affirmation of the enduring ideas Eddy anticipated. But

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<sup>705</sup> This phrase references Eddy's stated goal in organizing her church. *Manual of The Mother Church*, 17.

<sup>706</sup> Eddy's knowledge of and appreciation for extracanonical literature was discussed in Chapter Seven, "Relationships between Ancient and Nineteenth-Century Texts."

the same discovery challenges Christian Scientists to come to terms with the differences, such as the ancient text's revising of the accounts in *Genesis*, its identification of demons, and its strange terminology. The radical cultural differences between the two texts, such as English versus Greek (translated to Coptic), Roman Empire versus the United States of America, Plato versus Darwin, and demonology versus animal magnetism, help contemporary readers discover current cultural applications of persisting ideas. This distinction is important for a healing practice, because the healer needs to be clear about whether he or she is leaning on human opinion (culturally devised laws of behaviour) or divine ideas (permanent principles of Being).

Those who are immersed in the Mind-model of religion (as expressed in both *SRJ* and *S&H*) gain a deeper understanding of healing from discussing other Christians' views of it and from understanding the others' greater emphasis on healing that includes more than individual health and spiritual growth.

Appreciating the PT focus on the cultural context of human suffering can strengthen Christian Scientists' ability to heal through seeking the application of healing concepts to larger human problems. They can address broader systemic issues, such as racism, economic disparity, and climate change – which concern the larger Christian family – and would thereby enlarge the relevance of CS healing practice. PT also expands the CS healer's understanding of the human situation by contextualising the ancient belief in a higher power over the body. Belief in the hierarchical system of the cosmos explains how people in the second century might have conceived different reasons for their faith in Mind's (God's) government of the body. Faith in the theological view of God's supreme government remains intact for modern Christian Scientists, but knowing human reasoning from antiquity can help them (Christian Scientists) understand how people can conceive similar principles from completely different perspectives.

Christian Scientists can also gain fresh insights into the enduring ideas of their own religion by engaging with modern biblical and theological scholarship, which generally is informed by fluctuating social and philosophical attitudes. They can find similarities and differences that inform new vocabularies and imagery for ideas of healing. For example, feminist theology values Eddy's idea of God as Mother and egalitarian views of men and women. On the other hand, Christian Scientists can learn from feminist theologians how to enhance their Bible-reading from the wider perspectives of modern women and those who cross multiple cultural boundaries.<sup>707</sup> Public theology asks Christian Scientists (and all religions) to pay more attention to the wider social order, but also provides a more expansive view of the Christian salvific mission by insisting on its civil relevance.<sup>708</sup> These conversations highlight how different cultures can apply different labels to what they describe in similar ways. For instance, the term 'animal magnetism' derived its meaning from Mesmer and other nineteenth-century practitioners, but it operated quite similarly to the way *SRJ*'s demons operated in the second century. This second- and nineteenth-century idea of how evil works endures today and might be best captured by Wink's 'corporate spirits.' He asserts that corporations and governments have their own spirits, which can become demonic when business activities become self-serving.<sup>709</sup>

As expected during the framing of the PT critical conversation, I experienced transformation in the process of the conversation, especially in my approach to conversation with other Christians. Listening to the healing messages of the historical texts in conversation with each other, I encountered the strange similarities of healing ideas, but the contrasting cultures from which they emerged

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<sup>707</sup> Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds., *Women's Bible Commentary: Revised and Updated* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), xxix.

<sup>708</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, 75-77.

<sup>709</sup> Wink, *Powers that Be*, 5.

awakened me to the importance of understanding the cultural differences between myself and the nineteenth century. As a second-century Christian Scientist (from the beginning of CS), comparing myself (as text) to second-century followers of Jesus, I appreciate why my relationship to the original articulation of new ideas remains important, even while I need to re-imagine their meaning in my own era. For instance, widespread secular humanism of Western thought today fails to inspire the quest for salvation to the extent it did in the nineteenth century, and the desire for spiritually impelled healing fades somewhat with the increase of pharmaceutically-oriented life styles. However, conversation with twenty-first-century Christians alerts me to the changing forms of spiritual hunger of our age.<sup>710</sup> Even if salvation today looks more like social justice than souls rescued from purgatory, healing should play an even *greater* role, because healing individual bodies relies on the same healing principles as healing corporate bodies, according to both *SRJ* and *S&H*.

#### 4. Practical Theologians who Might Adopt this Methodology with Other Communities

Other groups – such as Orthodox and Pentecostal Christians, or Roman Catholics and Buddhists– that misunderstand each other can use the example of this thesis to model a learning and enriching conversation. This thesis is the first critical conversation known to me between Eddy’s *S&H* and an ancient extracanonical text, and certainly the first within the structure and methodology of PT. The three-way conversation, including the ancient *SRJ*, nineteenth-century *S&H*, and myself as a text, with enough distance between us, precluded my being an exponent of one position and assured a critical relationship to the texts. The

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<sup>710</sup> An example is the story of the expansion of Christianity in China today. A young Chinese woman theorises that without communism Chinese youth are seeking to fill a spiritual blank; they now find it in Christianity. Yuan Ren. “Inside China’s ‘secret churches,’” *Spectator* (12 November 2016): <http://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/11/inside-chinas-secret-churches/>.

purpose of the double conversation between texts and between epistemological perspectives presented in this thesis was to generate new insights for contemporary Christian theologies and practices of healing. Without PT, this conversation would have lost its value for mainstream Christianity today, because it helps break the impasse between two contrasting epistemologies. Suspicion of the other's 'false' worldviews has caused readers of *S&H* and participants in PT to frequently speak past each other, but now each can understand how the other contributes to the betterment of humanity.

As a practising healer taught by the Bible and Eddy's writings, I am aware of the bubble that often isolates CS healers from public discourse, but an open flow of conversation will benefit, at least to a degree, everyone interested in the Christian healing mission for humanity. PT was particularly well suited to accommodate this conversation, because its Christian origins have guided its healing purpose, and its response to the New Testament commitment to a global ministry has extended its boundaries. Because experience privileges theory in PT, it is able to identify and communicate the meaning of those whose lives are guided by contrasting theologies. Inviting a voice from outside PT's own development strengthens its overall usefulness by adding to its base of knowledge and experience. For instance, the terms 'mainstream' and 'traditional' could convey a particular kind of Christian perspective, but from within the traditional PT community what some see as a comfortable Christian perspective may not sound as exclusive as it does to those who do not identify with those views. A PT-based discussion that starts with one's experience and acknowledges the experiences of others is more inclusive than a discussion based on predetermined and definite doctrine or theory.

A simple, yet profound, conclusion is that this type of critical conversation – asking questions, listening, and sharing relevant information – benefits those who live by either of the action-guiding worldviews. In contrast with a pre-

arranged dialogue, the simplicity of conversation is its openness to an uncharted course, its capacity to hear unfamiliar voices, and its means for discovering the depth of meaning. The profundity of this conversation lies in the ancient and modern ideas themselves that form the theology of Christian healing. The most basic idea of *S&H* is that the Mind of Christ heals, and the most basic idea of PT is its focus on the relationship between faith and theological traditions and practical issues and actions concerned with human wellbeing.<sup>711</sup> But healing, or the mutual desire among all conversation partners for human wellbeing, is the central point of convergence between the two groups.

Reflexive theology, critical conversation, and a juxtaposition of historical texts produced new conclusions that would not have been reached without this PT methodology. Reflexive theology – using the ‘self’ as a data source – and critical conversation prove effective in bringing out the meaning of Christian healing from both ancient and Victorian age texts in a contemporary setting. I had begun the research for a comparison between historical texts through a historical critical method, but PT motivated me (and challenged me) to experience the critical dialogue for myself. I could have approached the study from the perspective of textual, structuralist, feminist, or medical criticism, and more could be said from all four methods, but challenging myself to participate in the critical conversation was not only transformative to me, but also allowed my voice of experience to contribute in a critically meaningful way.

PT methodology also exposes weaknesses through its critical lens. Reading just one historical text without conversation with another, for example, demonstrates the difficulty in distinguishing enduring ideas from anachronistic cultural beliefs. Also, without a shared epistemological means for communicating

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<sup>711</sup> Woodward, *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 3.

effectively outside our respective worldviews, I lack the language to describe my experience of the centrality of God in the context of others' theology or practice.

There are also limitations to what PT can accomplish, and these limitations must be considered in the conclusion of this thesis. Some examples<sup>712</sup> include the fact that:

- conversation partners can always withhold certain information;
- no true conversation can occur if fundamentalist attitudes are present;
- the selection of topics and conversation partners is necessarily limited and results in a small cross section of the variables;
- individuals with different healing experiences ask different questions.

Despite the limitations, the PT methodology makes a contribution beyond this thesis to a broader use to the academy, since it provided the framework for a conversation that has never taken place before.

These conversations broaden my understanding of healing, which in turn gives me greater access to meaningful conversation with Christians unfamiliar with my epistemological worldview. However, claiming that the conversation is beneficial to Christian Scientists in general is difficult, because such a claim can sound presumptuous to fellow Christian Scientists. Trusting that Christ communicates what is needed for understanding truth, some Christian Scientists may find it difficult to believe that I could have learned something outside the resources provided by Mary Baker Eddy. But in response to this critique, I want to clarify that my knowledge and healing experience within the Church, not a desire for an alternative, inspired me to seek conversations beyond the control of the Church.

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<sup>712</sup> Additional limitations were mentioned earlier: limitations of autoethnography, Chapter One, "Myself as Conversation Partner," and limitations of critical conversation, Chapter Two, "Methodological Problems and Solutions."

Practical Theologians can adopt three valuable methodological steps used in this project to deepen their understanding of another community they know little about. First, seeking help from a foreign faith community to identify two historical texts with related ideas and contrasting cultural contexts highlights the enduring ideas important to the community under study. Second, learning the action-guiding worldview underlying the foreign texts will help to establish the framework for the conversation. Finally, inviting a contemporary practitioner of the new community triangulates the critical conversation with texts and with the practical theologians seeking critical conversation with the community. These three steps opened the channels for greater reflection on the subject of Christian healing for me, and they have the potential to unlock the mysteries of many other communities.

##### 5. Ecumenists Who Want to Welcome a New Voice (CS)

Finally, an unintended but fortuitous consequence of the conversation with the historical texts is the contribution it makes to contemporary ecumenism. The PT methodology and the specific conversation with three Christian texts from three separate centuries have enabled me to articulate and evaluate a significant Christian experience outside the orthodox context. It allows Christianity to understand itself in an expanded way, moving the conversation among Christians to their mutual interest in human wellbeing.

This conversation about healing theologies was not designed as an ecumenical dialogue, but it accomplishes an ecumenical purpose. Ecumenism is devoted to Jesus's prayer that those who believe in him "may all be one...so that the world may believe that you [Holy Father] have sent me [Jesus]...so that they may be one, as we are one" (*John* 17:21,22). All conversation partners in these conversations identify with "those who believe in him," so an appropriate



response to Jesus's prayer is for us to seek unity with those who embrace contradictory epistemologies. Ecumenists are quick to point out that unity in Christ does not require unity in theology, denominational adherence, church polity, or healing practices. It does seek unity, however, in Christ.

*SRJ*'s contribution to this ecumenical purpose is clearer when we let it speak its own voice without the heavy weight of heretical accusation. The Savior heals people and returns them to the loving realm of God. Eddy's contribution is to defend the Christian's theistic view of God's presence and relevance to humanity in health and moral strength. PT's contribution is its ability to bring marginalised voices to a meaningful conversation with fellow Christians. Neither PT critical conversation nor ecumenism ever intend to diminish differences, rather they both contribute to unity by deepening an understanding of Christian issues. In this case, the conversation about healing unites all conversation partners in a better understanding of healing, while simultaneously shedding light on the reasons for the differences.

## Past and Present Relevance

We can now let the texts of antiquity challenge us on their own merits and in our age. Nineham claims that despite our need to demonstrate the relevance of the Bible (*and*, I argue, other important extracanonical texts) in every age, we still need to learn from the past at innumerable points. He also points out difficulties new interpretations encounter when trying to accommodate both the past and present. Some people, for example,

find themselves driven towards certain conclusions about the Bible, but on the other hand, feel guilty about those conclusions or even refuse to draw them, because they seem different from those of the Christian past, and so, it is felt, cannot be the right ones, even in the twentieth century.<sup>713</sup>

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<sup>713</sup> Nineham, *Church's Use of the Bible*, 146-7.

The authors of both *SRJ* and *S&H* maintained the authority of Scriptures as the guide to pastoral care or healing and salvation, but they drew new conclusions that were deemed incorrect by many of their contemporaries. *SRJ* boldly addressed the impotence of evil with a new interpretation of *Genesis*; and Eddy consciously claimed her Christian authority for teaching pastoral care despite her opposition to tradition.<sup>714</sup>

Both authors' bold responses to contemporary human needs convey confidence in the authority of their unique revelatory messages. Neither claims to have founded a new or separate religion, but rather to have presented new (and eternal) interpretations of the Christian religion. They both challenge orthodox doctrine for the Christian *purpose* of strengthening practical care and response to contemporary human concerns. Hodgson's three twenty-first-century themes – ecological and cosmological awareness, the struggle for justice, and cultural and religious pluralism – highlights the ongoing need for an efficacious theology of God's care and power. He also calls for a bold challenge to traditional doctrine so that the Christian message can speak to today's issues. He asks for example how Christians can affirm the identity of Jesus as the Christ without negating the people of Israel. He is not interested in dismantling Christian identity, but in finding *within* the Christian message what will most effectively address twenty-first-century concerns. Proclaiming the existence of a 'divine' man performing miraculous deeds, for instance, would not accomplish what thinking of God as redemptively present in the world would do. Because God takes the negation, suffering, and death of Jesus's human condition into God's own being, Hodgson argues that God redeems the world of its brokenness and prevents God from being

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<sup>714</sup> Eddy, *Science and Health*, x.

other-worldly.<sup>715</sup> But he insists that Chalcedonian doctrine must adjust to these needs, by following these requirements: (1) the connection between Jesus and Christ must be loosened, (2) supernaturalism, patriarchalism, and docetism must be avoided to preserve the full humanity of Jesus while affirming God's incarnate presence in him, and (3) the redemptive nature of this incarnation must be explained meaningfully.<sup>716</sup>

Neither Eddy nor the author of *SRJ* teach that God took negation into God's being, but all three of Hodgson's requirements for adjustment illustrate how an expansion from mainstream or orthodox views can emerge from an overriding conviction in the practicality of the gospel message for contemporary human concerns. *SRJ* and *S&H* call into question doctrines established in earlier eras, and their views should be evaluated on the basis of their efficacy and support of the Christian purpose, rather than on their divergence from mainstream expectations.

Today we are called upon to find the place for an ancient text in our own unique historic moment. Every age and every community faces new pastoral needs, and each one must approach the ancient Christian writings in different ways to find relevance to the contemporary situation. Studying *SRJ* and *S&H* together, with their focus on pastoral concern for soul and body, gives us a fuller, richer perspective on the history of Christian thought and purpose.

## Emergent Questions

Critical conversation brings new insights to light because conversation partners discover something of themselves they had little need to know before the

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<sup>715</sup> Peter C. Hodgson, *Christian Faith: A Brief Introduction*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 110.

<sup>716</sup> Hodgson, *Christian Faith*, 109.

conversation. Questions emerge from this new knowledge, and they lead to valuable breakthroughs.

From the perspective of non-medical healing in modern times, healers may wonder what the primary objective of their healing practice should be. In the correlation between healing and salvation, *SRJ*'s image of unwavering love and *S&H*'s teaching of the presence of heaven show the desirability of seeking salvation here and now. In that context, healers could probe the question of the purpose of healing. Is it relief from pain, in competition with medical healing? Should their patients expect physical relief, even if their corresponding moral or spiritual growth is difficult to secure? Many who have been healed through Christian Science treatment attest to the fact that the physical healing was a welcome relief but that the relief was dwarfed by the deep spiritual peace that came through the treatment.

Early Christian scholars may probe further the theme of healing in *SRJ* in theological, social, and medical contexts. Since *SRJ* records no individual experiences with healing, it would be of value to scholars to discover whether there was any direct correlation between the theological treatise (*SRJ*) and the actual practice of healing for its readers. Scholars could devise a new methodology to determine whether any of the records of healing by the opponents of Plotinus or other 'gnostics'<sup>717</sup> were related to the healing teachings of *SRJ*. More research into the correlation between healing and salvation may explain the impact of a healing experience on a Christian in antiquity. Would healing imply spiritual or moral superiority to those who do not experience healing? Would it elevate one's social status among Christians, or proffer power? Was it viewed more as a moral achievement than physical relief?

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<sup>717</sup> Plotinus and his opposition to the healing methods of the 'gnostics' was discussed in Chapter Five, "Demon Tactics and Counter Tactics."

For those who practice healing on the basis of *S&H* teaching, many new ethical questions arise in the context of twenty-first century. Medical practice has evolved dramatically since the writing of *S&H*, making it more difficult to follow specific directions in *S&H* regarding conversations with doctors. One example is the fact that in the twenty-first century relieving pain through medical means now involves more medical information and testing than was the practice in the nineteenth century. Also, Christian Scientists could explore the meaning of their theological teaching in the context of more extensive contemporary research on the social and psychological impact of disabilities. For example, many disabled people resent the general attitude among healers that their conditions ought to change and conform to the healers' models. Their identity and social relationships are intertwined with the functioning of their bodies. On the other hand, many discoveries in science, anthropology, and Christian studies are contributing new insights that confirm the validity of healing through the means of divine power and consciousness. This research extends far beyond curiosity about the paranormal and relies on the most sophisticated research techniques available today.

The conversation between the two historical texts expands the quantity and quality of data available for early Christian studies, because their similar epistemological approaches to the same canonical texts originate from vastly different cultural contexts. New questions can be asked, such as the value of ante-Nicene theology, the extent to which those views alter our understanding of Christianity today, and whether early Christians should or should not model Christian self-understanding today.

Finally, the research has opened many new areas of investigation of interest to me. I am especially interested in what I can learn from all of the resources I explored that will help me become a better healer. I am encouraged that PT taught me how to find and use other resources to study healing theologies

and practices. Also my experience with this PT critical conversation brought out useful ideas that would otherwise have remained unknown, so I would like to make fuller use of this methodology with other conversation partners.

## Concluding Remarks

This conversation arose from my own desire to communicate beyond the bubble, and I found spiritual reassurance as well as constructive criticism in the process. Christians with similar and quite different epistemological worldviews are invited to reflect on these theologies of healing, to counter with further critical insights, and to adopt whatever ideas may be useful to their own healing practices. Additionally, constructive conversation with extracanonical texts such as *SRJ* gives modern Christians the opportunity to re-envision the ancient messages for Christians who continually reinvent themselves, their ideas, and their communities.<sup>718</sup> The questions, answers, and *unanswered* questions raised by these conversation partners deepen our understanding of Christian healing theologies and practices in the past, and bring to light new insights into the practical aspects of healing theologies for the present and future.

I am grateful that my patients' and my personal healing experiences inspired me to look beyond myself to the far reaches of early Christianity and to a field of inquiry outside my range of experience to learn what I can give and receive in conversation with other Christians. The methodology of PT exposed the all-important epistemological contrasts and gave structure to a critical conversation with both ancient texts and modern thinkers. This unique conversation between contrasting historical texts and contrasting epistemological

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<sup>718</sup> Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 136-7.

views with the support of PT methodology provides new perspectives on the meaning of Christian healing to Christians who have a variety of healing theologies and practices.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

The following terms carry special meanings only within the context in which the text appears, except as noted in the twenty-first century.

### ***Secret Revelation of John***

Aeon – This term is used frequently in antiquity to designate a spatial entity, such as in a realm. In extracanonical texts it can also be personified, such as in Sophia/Wisdom. In *SRJ* (and in other second century texts) it is an emanation from the First Principle (God).

Archon – In *SRJ*, archons were appointed by the Chief Ruler, Yaldabaoth, to create and to torture the humans under his control. Lewis defines ‘archon’: “Greek word for ‘prince’ or ‘ruler.’ A term for a secular ruler, which becomes in these texts the name for powerful but deeply flawed celestial beings. Archons are always negative characters.” Lewis, *Introduction to "Gnosticism,"* 280.

Christ – Christ is the pre-existent divine being; he is the Saviour identified as ‘Autogenes’ (‘self-begotten’). The identity of Christ in *SRJ* is so similar to the Christ of the *Gospel of John*, Lewis posits the possibility that in antiquity *SRJ* was intended as the backstory account to the *Gospel of John*. In both texts, the Saviour (Son/Logos) was sent into the world to shine in the darkness. In *SRJ*, however, the Saviour is the divine self-originate, or *Autogenes* (‘self-begotten’), whereas in the *Gospel of John* he is the ‘only begotten’ (KJV) of the Father.

Demiurge – This term does not appear explicitly in *SRJ*, but when Yaldabaoth appears in other extracanonical texts, he is often identified as a demiurge. The term is from Plato’s dialogue *Timaeus* and was used to identify the



creator god in contrast with a supreme or strictly heavenly God. In Sethian texts, such as *SRJ*, the demiurge was a negative force, whereas in Valentinian writings, he is regarded favourably. The term was in common use during the second century.

Demon – The general meaning of the term is somewhat elusive to the modern interpreter. The Coptic word is *daimonion*, translated as ‘demon.’ In Greek, the word is *daimon*, which is translated variously as ‘god,’ ‘deity,’ ‘fortune,’ ‘demon,’ ‘spirit.’ In English, the word *daimon* is sometimes used to signal an early Christian context, but *demon* is also used synonymously.

The context for the daimons in *SRJ* is especially relevant in the longer version, where every detail of the human body is created by and governed by a distinctly named daimon/demon. The commonly believed astrological association with demons reinforces the idea that the demons were understood as the source of control over the body part associated with each one. But their importance in *SRJ* is their careful lengthy inclusion in the account of creation, where the knowledge of their names was believed to have given people the power to exorcise them.

Epinoia – Epinoia is one of the identities of the Saviour. She is “the Epinoia of the light, the one... named Life” (18:23) and is sent by the Mother Pronoia to correct conceptions of the Divine realm with light or reflection and to save humanity.

God – God is expressed in terms designed to point to something more profound than limited human language and human thinking. Some of the phrases from *SRJ* that define God are:

\* The Monad, the Father of the All, the invisible which dwells above the All, the imperishableness which exists as the pure light (4:2-4)

\* The invisible Spirit; inappropriate to consider It to be like the gods or something similar; It is more than divine, without anything existing over it (4:5,6)

\* Totally perfect (4:11); cannot be limited (4:13); inscrutable (4:14), immeasurable (4:15); invisible (4:16); eternity existing eternally (4:17); ineffable being in incorruptibility (4:21);

\* Not something among existing things (4:28)

Jesus – The name ‘Jesus’ is used only once and at the end of the tractate. John speaks to his ‘Saviour’ in both of these occasions, and the inference is clear that this Saviour is Jesus Christ.

\* The introduction of the text claims *SRJ* to be “the teaching of the Savior and the revelation of the mysteries” (1:1).

\* The tractate concludes with: “And the Savior gave these things to him [John] so that he might write them down and keep them secure (27:10)... He [John] related to them [his fellow disciples] the things which the Savior had said to him. Jesus Christ Amen” (27:15,16).

Similarly with other second-century texts, Jesus was fully transcendent with a human appearance albeit a shape-shifting one. John (of *SRJ*) reports, “[I] was afraid and behold’ in the light I saw a child standing by me. When I saw him, he became like an old person and he shifted his semblance, becoming like a servant” (3:4-7).

Monad – Lewis defines the term as “A single, divine principle from which all things issue.” (Lewis, *Introduction to "Gnosticism,"* 285). As understood in *SRJ*, the Monad is God the Father, the Great Invisible Spirit. It (or He) is usually expressed in apophatic terms, such as ineffable, illimitable, unsearchable, immeasurable, unnameable, and invisible, because they

convey the limitation of the human thought to fully comprehend or describe.

Pronoia – Pronoia is the Greek term for ‘forethought’ or Latin for ‘Providence.’

Foreseeing God’s plan for salvation and because of her place in the original monad with the Father-Mother, she is one of the female aeons who work to assist in the act of salvation. Her role as a salvific figure is associated with the Jewish conceptualisations of Wisdom (*Sophia*).

A couple of examples from *SRJ* that define Pronoia:

- \* This is Pronoia, namely: Barbelo [Mother], Thought, Foreknowledge, Indestructibility, Eternal Life, and Truth (6:25), who proceeds from the Invisible Spirit/Father; has eternal life (6:12)
- \* I, the perfect Pronoia of the All, changed into my seed” (26:1), in order to travel the vast darkness to enter the prison (26:5,6). “I entered the midst of the prison, which is the prison of the body” (26:21). “Arise and remember that you are the one who has heard, and follow your root, which is I, the compassionate. (26:28-29).

Psychic –The term ‘psychic’ has a special use in early Christian thought. Unlike the modern Cartesian dichotomy between body and soul, the human self of antiquity was conceived in relatively common philosophical and religious views with three elements within a spectrum: matter, soul, and spirit. Paul speaks of them in terms of the fleshly, the *psychical*, and the spiritual (*1 Cor 2:13-3:1*). But Irenaeus thought the ‘Gnostic heresy’ (including *SRJ*) claimed three *classes* of people: the ‘material’ (*choic* or *hylic*), the ‘psychic’ (earthly one who possesses soul but not spirit), and the ‘spiritual’ (*pneumatic*). He faulted ‘the Gnostics’ for claiming the spiritual ones alone possessed Spirit and were therefore saved. However, more scholars are expressing dissatisfaction with this inherited caricature of

Valentinian theology with its deterministic understanding of humanity. (Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism,"* 1996, 190). I agree with these scholars that *SRJ* can be read more accurately with an understanding of the three aspects of humanity as Paul describes them. *SRJ* expounds on the movement *out* of the entrapment of the lowest level – the material. The psychic body is the one in the middle, or the ordinary, human body, which will also be overcome by everyone in the final ascent to the pneumatic, or spiritual state.

Salvation – My understanding of ‘salvation’ in relation to healing in *SRJ* is: the process of removing or becoming free of counterfeit thoughts that impede the acknowledgement of Deity-created perfection. The complete salvation is full freedom from influence from demons, and enables one to live in the joy of the divine realm.

Saviour. There are multiple identities of the ‘saviour’ in *SRJ*, and most of them are sent by the lead saviour, Pronoia. Sophia and Jesus are also both understood as saviours in *SRJ*. The Saviour in *SRJ*, therefore, is a teacher, a guide, an awakener, a healer, and a rescuer from mortality and all suffering. The term translated as ‘Saviour’ is only used in specific dialogue with John in the ‘frame story,’ or prologue and epilogue of the text.

Seth - Seth, as the third son of Adam and Eve in *Genesis*, does not receive much attention in canonical scriptures, but in other Jewish texts, such as *Book of Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*, he is understood either as an allegorical or literal ancestor of humankind. The tradition evidently endured into the second century, as a similar ‘Sethian’ tradition appears in eleven of the fifty-three treatises in the Nag Hammadi library. The “seed of Seth” is usually understood to be the form of the divine Humanity within the material human body. The coming of the great Seth in the form of Jesus takes place

at baptism (a highly important concept or ritual within Sethian literature), whereby mortals are returned to their divine seed (of Seth).

Sophia – Greek term for ‘wisdom;’ an aeon of the Epinoia; the mother of Yaldabaoth; also paired with Eve on the human level. In other texts probably familiar to *SRJ* readers, Sophia is associated with the Logos, or Word, as the female expression of it. In the apocryphal books, *Wisdom* and *Sirach*, Wisdom is sent forth from the heavenly abode of God to abide with and support earthly labourers.

Sophia is the pivotal figure in *SRJ* because of her divine origin, her link to the flawed creation, her repentance, and her unique ability to save those who suffer. Despite her mistake in creating her own offspring without the consent of her male partner, her repentance and consequent ability to save others is central to the story of salvation.

Yaldabaoth – Offspring of the divine aeon, Sophia, and her ignorant or willful disregard for the divine order. Yaldabaoth declares himself the Chief Ruler of his entire counterfeit creation, which is a mockery of the divine. He pronounces himself to be a jealous god, who tolerates nothing greater than himself. Thus, when he discovers the divine spark within the humanity he and his demons created, his enraged envy provokes him to torture humans to death. But his work is exposed as a counterfeit and is overthrown by the true God and the saviours sent to rescue humanity.

### ***Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures***

God – Eddy defines God as “incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love,” and explains the synonymous

relationship between these terms. God's attributes are "justice, mercy, wisdom, goodness, and so on" (*S&H*, 465).

Human – 'Human' is the second state of consciousness, following the first state of depravity, and preceding the spiritual state. The state of humanity is defined as "evil beliefs disappearing," and includes characteristics such as honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance." (*S&H*, 115)

Law – The logic of Eddy's 'Science' is based on a distinction between civil law and divine law. "Civil law establishes very unfair differences between the rights of the two sexes" (*S&H*, 63). "Deductions from material hypotheses are not scientific. They differ from real Science because they are not based on the divine law" (*S&H*, 273).

Man – "God's spiritual idea, individual, perfect, eternal" (*S&H*, 115).

Nineteenth-century usage commonly identified 'man' in a generic, not gendered sense. Since modern English does not include a word that carries this meaning, in this thesis I join other scholars, such as King and Wink, who adopt the use of 'Human' (with a capital 'H') to signify Eddy's sense of 'man.'

Prayer – Prayer should align the pray-er to God's love and goodness; it does not change God's mind or will, but brings one closer to God. Eddy explains, "Prayer cannot change the unalterable Truth, nor can prayer alone give us an understanding of Truth; but prayer, coupled with a fervent habitual desire to know and do the will of God, will bring us into all Truth" (*S&H*, 11).

## Contemporary Usage

God – I understand the term as is used in *S&H* (above).

Human – King distinguishes between two Coptic words that can be translated, ‘man,’ in English. However Π-ΡΩΜΕ also means ‘person,’ or ‘human being’ without emphasis on gender, whereas Π-ΖΟΟΥΤ refers to a male human being. To distinguish between them in English, she translates Π-ΡΩΜΕ with special capitalization of ‘Human.’ The situation is similar for Eddy, who distinguished between ‘human’ and ‘man’ in that ‘man’ represents a generic sense of humankind. However, in conformity with feminist views that the term ‘man’ should signify only a male human being in English, the shift in meaning requires a new locution to express the idea that consequently has been removed. Eddy’s use of ‘man’ was consistent with the English usage of her day, which signified both a male human *and* a generic sense of humankind. But since she also distinguishes between a ‘human’ state of consciousness and the highest spiritual state of consciousness (known as ‘man’), I find it helpful in this age to adopt King’s special capitalization of ‘Human’ to signify Eddy’s spiritual idea, ‘man.’

Man – I recognize the change in language between the nineteenth and twenty-first century, so I use the term ‘man’ to refer solely to a male human being.

Prayer – I understand the term as is used in *S&H* (above).

## Appendix 2: Eddy's Distinction Between Body and Matter

*Eddy addressed the relationship between body and matter in a statement published in the Christian Science Sentinel (12 October 1899). It is quoted in full below:*

### A Correction

In the last *Sentinel* was the following question: "If all matter is unreal, why do we deny the existence of disease in the material body and not the body itself?"

We deny *first* the existence of disease, because we can meet this negation more readily than we can negative [sic] all that the material senses affirm. It is written in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures": "An improved belief is one step out of error, and aids in taking the next step and in understanding the situation in Christian Science" (p. 296).

Thus it is that our great Exemplar, Jesus of Nazareth, first takes up the subject. He does not require the last step to be taken first. He came to the world not to destroy the law of being, but to fulfil it in righteousness. He restored the diseased body to its normal action, functions, and organization, and in explanation of his deeds he said, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Job said, "In my flesh shall I see God." Neither the Old nor the New Testament furnishes reasons or examples for the destruction of the human body, but for its restoration to life and health as the scientific proof of "God with us." The power and prerogative of Truth are to destroy all disease and to raise the dead — even the self-same Lazarus. The *spiritual* body, the incorporeal idea, came with the *ascension*.

Jesus demonstrated the divine Principle of Christian Science when he presented his *material* body absolved from death and the grave. The introduction of pure abstractions into Christian Science, without their correlatives, leaves the



divine Principle of Christian Science unexplained, tends to confuse the mind of the reader, and ultimates in what Jesus denounced, namely, straining at gnats and swallowing camels.<sup>719</sup>

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<sup>719</sup> This article is reprinted in Eddy, *Miscellany*, 217.

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